

"DELIVERANCE"

by James Dickey

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From the Novel

by

JAMES DICKEY

SCREENPLAY

by

JAMES DICKEY AND JOHN BOORMAN

SECOND DRAFT
January 11, 1971

1. EXT. DAM PROJECT (HELICOPTER)

DAY

A long high view of a gap between two mountains which is gradually being dammed. An endless convoy of trucks winds up a temporary road to the dam, each tips its load of rock and rubble, then turns down again. A deep wooded valley is slowly being walled-up.

At the base of the dam a silver thread of river still escapes through an open sluice-gate. A huge billboard proclaims 'The Cahulawassee Dam Project' and shows an artist's impression of the finished Dam and an idyllic lake behind it.

MAIN TITLES BEGIN.

2. EXT. CAHULAWASSEE RIVER

DAY

Follow the river up stream from the dam through tall secret woods and naked rock faces, up the white water of angry rapids, across still deep pools and finally to a road bridge where a decrepit, small Southern town straddles its banks. Move in closer to a clump of trees by the riverside and on through the trees to reveal an old cemetery where men are digging up graves, disinterring the dead. Rotting coffins are piled on to a truck, catafalques are broken asunder, head stones piled up in neat stacks like sliced bread.

TITLES CONCLUDE.

3. EXT. FIELD ARCHERY RANGE

DUSK

The face of ED GENTRY in profile: an indoor-desk man in early middle-age, flesh a little soft. He is wearing a bushhat and shooting arrows. The bow string appears, drawn back and pressed into the cheek by the fingers of his right hand.

The arrow lies across his face, the feathers rasping against the bristles of his jowl. His eye lines up behind a curious orange peephole in the bow-string, far-focusing. The nice, open, suburban American face contorts in the act of concentration, becoming animal and a little frightening.

Then the fingers relax and the arrow is simply no longer there. The face falls back to what it was.

LEWIS MEDLOCK's head comes into view alongside and just behind ED's. He glances off at the unseen target and then at ED. LEWIS has a powerful, ascetic face with bright alert eyes that might be just a little manic.

(CONTINUED)

3 (Cont.)

LEWIS

A little high. Eleven o'clock.

ED draws another arrow, his face again transfigured by the power of full draw. Still the target is unseen, only the faces of the two men visible.

He stays a long time at full-draw. He starts to shake and the arrow rips away, flying out of the bow. ED curses.

ED

Why does that happen, Lewis?

LEWIS

It happens.

LEWIS takes ED's place, knocking an arrow. ED shakes his head disgusted.

LEWIS

Draw hysteria. You either conquer it and make it work for you, or it destroys you as an archer.

LEWIS draws, holding the bow high and bringing it down on to the target, revealing a glimpse of an awesome bicep. He is confident, calm, mystical. ED's look is amused, affectionate, but definitely impressed.

LEWIS shoots an arrow beautifully, rhythmically, with a perfect tranquil follow-through.

He finishes and the TWO MEN walk towards the target revealing themselves fully for the first time, also the range. Field archery is something like golf, a series of targets at different distances set amongst trees and brush. This one has been artificially developed on wasteland in the city itself. It is a little patch of wild woods hemmed in on one side by an elevated freeway, on the others, by railway sidings and indeterminate industrial buildings.

The targets are pinned to bales of straw and this one is in the shape of a paper deer. They examine their shots and pull out the arrows. The paper deer and the city looming over them makes the archery seem very tame, a faint echo of what it once meant to hunters and warriors.

LEWIS straightens up as though suddenly aware of this, looking round at the range with some contempt, his powerful chest framed against the freeway.

(CONTINUED)

3 (Cont.1)

LEWIS
(intoning it)
The Cahulawassee River! Wait till
you see it, Ed. I tell you, it's
wild and beautiful.

He speaks softly, his voice hypnotic. He looks off into the distance as though he can see the river and ED follows his eyeline towards the city that is lighting up for the night.

LEWIS
When you get that white water under
you, things change, and all of this
is washed away.

Then breaking off, moving away, he says mockingly over his shoulder.

LEWIS
And they've got deer up there, Ed,
and they're made of meat instead
of paper.

ED follows him, laughing.

4. INT./EXT. RESTAURANT BAR ATLANTA DAY

LEWIS and ED have been lunching or drinking beer with two other men, BOBBY and DREW. All four are in their late thirties or early forties.

They wear lightweight business suits, all but LEWIS who has on an expensive sports shirt.

They are milling around the cash desk, paying the tab, talking and laughing.

BOBBY
But we know nothing about canoeing,
Lewis.

They spill out of the door.

LEWIS
(plausible and
persuasive)
There's nothing to it. We leave
Friday morning at first light and
we'll be back on Sunday in time to
catch the last half of the TV pro game.

4.

5.

EXT. ARCADE

DAY

They amble with the crowd along a sunken arcade. The city roads and sidewalks cross above them.

BOBBY

.... but shooting rapids!

LEWIS

Sure. It's the second best sensation in the world.

They start up a spiral of steps, up to street level. The impression is of rivers of people flowing above them, below them, around them.

DREW

(poking fun at Lewis)

The Vanishing Wilderness, huh?

LEWIS

(relentless)

This is. When the dam at Ainty is finished, the water'll back up and the river's going to disappear for ever. It's our last chance to see it.

6.

EXT. PEACHTREE STREET ATLANTA

DAY

They bob up into the blazing sun. The black glass circular tower of the Regency Hyatt House Hotel dominates the street. Drab typists and flabby business men thread their way back to the office blocks over the hot sidewalks. The street is snarled with traffic, choked with exhaust fumes. Up the street there has been a minor accident.

DREW

(the stifling crowd
deciding him)

Hell, let's take it then.

BOBBY

Why not?

ED watches all this, the dead faces of the crowd, the moan of the traffic: LEWIS sucking them all into his scheme. He is evidently oppressed by it but does nothing about it, too lethargic perhaps. His eye moves to the black glass tower, the city reflected and gramedented in its facets.

DREW

(O.S.)

I've got to go.

(CONTINUED)

6 (Cont.)

BOBBY

(O.S.)

Yeah, Lewis, some of us have to
work for a living.

7. INT. ED'S OFFICE

DAY

It is modern, tasteful. There are some very good action portraits of his wife and son on the wall with one or two framed art director awards. His desk is strewn with roughs, drawings, samples of lettering, half-finished comps, and prominently, layouts for an ad for Kitt 'n Britches. It is a drawing of a girl in nothing but panties holding a kitten and looking back over her shoulder.

ED looks at none of this but stands motionless, lethargic at the enormous window that makes up the outer wall. He is staring at the same round, black tower which is much closer now, just across the street. It throws back its broken, kaleidoscopic view of the city.

The 'phone rings. Without moving his eyes from the tower, he answers it.

ED

You're all ready back there?
I'll be down in a second.

He puts down the 'phone, takes a deep breath, exhales it sharply, and goes out of his door, carrying the Kitt 'n Britches layouts.

8. INT. ADVERTISING STUDIO

DAY

ED comes out of his private office and walks down the length of a large open-bay studio where some of the commercial artists are working or laughing or talking.

ED assumes the air of dynamic executive and his employees smile or nod to him familiarly, but get back to their work too. ED enters a door at the end of the room.

9. INT. PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO

DAY

The model, in a black and white checked robe, is sitting in a camp chair. An older woman, obviously an employee, is holding a kitten. Two or three men are bustling about under the lights. They clear away newspapers from the place where the model will stand to be photographed. They are incredibly serious and intense as only men doing something fundamentally trivial, can be.

(CONTINUED)

9 (Cont.)

The model stands on the chalk marks and a girl assistant takes her robe.

The model is revealed, wearing only the Kitt 'n Britches. ED's mouth opens and he sucks in breath. There is a 'my God' look in his face. She is brown and freckled, shapely but muscular, but above all fresh, a country girl.

Her arms are folded across her bare breasts. The woman hands her the kitten. She takes it in one hand, and to protect herself, simply holds her left breast in her hand in a beautiful gesture. At the same time she turns and catches ED's look, recognising the homage it pays her.

She smiles at him, not a simpering or coquettish look, but in a simple act of private giving.

ED stretches out an arm and touches her shoulder with his finger tips.

10. INT. ED'S BEDROOM

DAWN

His wife, MARTHA, lies with her back facing ED. He stretches out his hand and touches her shoulder in exactly the same spot as he did the model girl. It might even be the model girl at this point. MARTHA responds by turning towards him with a movement that is entirely habitual. She has her head wrapped in a kind of towel, the sort of protective covering that sufferers from sinusitis wear. She does not open her eyes, even when she speaks. They are both very still. There is a faint tinkle, as of Chinese wind-bells.

MARTHA

Are you really going?

ED

I think so.

MARTHA

Can I do anything?

ED

Just one thing.

Her eyes open.

MARTHA

What time is it? Do we have time?

ED

Lewis won't be by till six. We have time.

(CONTINUED)

10 (Cont.)

Still neither has moved or touched.

MARTHA

(very softly)

Which way, honey?

ED

Why don't you turn over this time.

She is on her side, facing him. She looks at him, trying to read him, but he shuts her out. She pulls a pillow down to her pelvis then turns slowly on to it, burying her face in the bed.

ED crawls to her, and over her, looking down at her back.

FLASH CUT.

The MODEL GIRL turns, smiling, taking her breast in her hand.

11. INT. ED'S LIVING ROOM

DAY

LEWIS, ready for the woods, stands framed in the open back door. He looks in, grinning, a little crazily. At first it seems he might be watching ED and MARTHA in bed; but then ED appears, dressed, with his bow in his hand, knife and rope on his belt.

LEWIS

(softly)

The sun's coming up. Up north the water's running.

12. EXT. ED'S BACKYARD

DAY

A long, curved aluminum canoe lies across the top of LEWIS' stationwagon, blending into it in the early morning half-light, transforming the familiar car-shape. ED and LEWIS climb in.

The back of the car is packed with equipment, tents and so on, mostly in various shades of green. The car backs cut into the deserted suburban street leaving MARTHA and DEAN, Ed's son, huddled together, waving.

13. INT. LEWIS' CAR

DAY

LEWIS'S car is parked outside an apartment block.

(CONTINUED)

13 (Cont.)

BOBBY emerges from it with ED. They climb into the car and LEWIS spurts away as though they have robbed a bank. BOBBY is bleary-eyed, his hair unkempt. He slumps into the back. LEWIS frowns at him through the rear-view mirror.

BOBBY

Sorry, friends. Wow. What a night that was. This demure little housewife wants to buy insurance on her husband's life - while he's away - always a promising situation - but this time! Oh boy! It had to be on his bed, and the whole time she just cursed and cussed him. I couldn't shake off the feeling she was using me.

They all laugh. BOBBY's story restores their goodspirits.

BOBBY

(looking around vaguely)
Hey, where's Drew?

LEWIS

He had to fix something at his bottling plant at the last minute. I never thought getting four guys out of this city could be so tough.

ED

Maybe the city doesn't want to lose us.

LEWIS

.... the old where.

14. INT. SOFT-DRINK BOTTLING PLANT

DAY

A low modern factory, no windows. Thousands of bottles jerk along conveyor belts, being washed, filled, capped and packed. LEWIS, ED and BOBBY lounge around watching while DREW fiddles with dials on an electronic control panel. The plant is totally automated.

DREW

The computer indicated a demand-drop over the next 48 hours. I just have to set the new work rates. They're like babies, these computers, incredibly demanding.

BOBBY picks up a bottle and reads the small print around the base.

(CONTINUED)

14 (Cont.)

BOBBY

(reading)

An artificially flavoured, saccharine
sweetened, aerated drink with
approved coloring.

(he looks up)

It should be called 'sweet fuck-all'
because that's what it is.

ED

The machine really runs America,
doesn't it? All the while Drew's
out there on the river, this place'll
be working its ass off. Not a soul
here.

BOBBY

Nobody, making millions of bottles
of nothing.

LEWIS straightens up and moves a pace or two into the
complex of revolving machinery and criss-cross lines of
juddering bottles. His physical presence is like a challenge
to the machine.

LEWIS

Well, I think the machine is going
to fail.

DREW

Not this one, I hope. Not this
weekend anyway.

LEWIS

The machines are going to fail and
the political systems are going to
fail. And if they don't people are
going to smash them down.

ED

And what then -

LEWIS

Then it's going to come down to who
can survive and who can't, when the
lights go out and the taps are dry.
Survival.

And there they stand, four men in the middle of a convulsive
forest of bottles.

10.

15. EXT. HIGHWAY

DAY

The cars with canoes on their tops drive through the ugly clutter of the outskirts of the city, past drive-ins, motels, shopping centers, filling stations. The morning traffic is going into the city as they head out.

16. INT. LEWIS' CAR

DAY

LEWIS is driving. He holds the wheel at the top with his hands crossed and his arms at full stretch, tensing him against the seat.

LEWIS

.... the human body. That's the one thing you can't fake. No way.

ED

Go ahead. Crucify yourself lifting weights. I'm committed to the machine. And America.

Outside on the highway the billboards, the electric pylons, stride across the countryside proclaiming their dominance.

LEWIS

We took the wrong road. It's a blind alley, believe me. It can't last. It can't support its own weight.

ED

Listen, Lewis, it will last as long as we believe it will last. When enough guys like you stop believing in it, then it will collapse. It's a matter of faith.

LEWIS

Everything's so fucked up, so complicated... I wouldn't mind if it all fell apart and we started over.... And you know where I'd go? Right where we're going now. It's basic. It's real.

(CONTINUED)

16 (Cont.)

ED

Reality? Come on now, Lewis.
What's reality except pain and
cold and fear? And convulsive
things like killing and screwing.

LEWIS

And apart from screwing, they're
bad news, right? But what
happens when the city insulates
you from these things?

ED has had enough. He sinks back in his seat.

ED

Listen, I like my life.

LEWIS

I know what it does to you, Ed.

ED looks at him sharply.

LEWIS

City life is killing you.
(he pauses for effect).
It's boring you to death. You're
rotting.

ED is shaken, penetrated. He glares at LEWIS.

ED

And what bugs you, Lewis?

LEWIS pauses, looking steadily at the road.

LEWIS

Insanity. I'm scared of going
crazy.

17. EXT. HIGHWAY

DAY

They are getting into rural scenery. There are Clabber Girl
signs and laxative posters and crosses that say 'Jesus Saves.'

18. INT. CAR

DAY

LEWIS is silent, ED dozing. They are twisting and turning
up a mountain road. LEWIS sees something ahead and shakes
ED awake.

LEWIS

Ed, deer!

(CONTINUED)

18 (Cont.)

ED starts up and looks out into the woods where LEWIS points. But too late. He smiles pleasurably at the sight of the mountains.

ED

The Wilderness!

19. INT. CAR

DAY

They go over a narrow bridge, the kind made from concrete sections in the thirties. ED leans out of the window, looking curiously at the river. The river seems placid and narrow, undistinguished, rather uninteresting.

ED

That it?

LEWIS

That's it.

ED turns back to the river to conceal his disappointment from LEWIS.

20. EXT. OREE

DAY

The two cars pull into Oree. It is a disheartening place, a typical remote small southern town. The woods and weed-fields seem to grow right up to the edge of it. There are no Negroes in evidence, for this is on the hills, and there is no precedent. There is a town hall, the fire engine being washed near it; a couple of gas stations. Graffiti is scrawled on a wall; 'STOP THEM DROWNING OUR LAND'. There are several deserted and boarded up houses.

21. EXT. GAS STATION

DAY

LEWIS's car and the other pull into a Texaco station. LEWIS pulls to a stop and kills the engine. For a moment nothing happens. Then an OLD MAN appears at the window of the car at LEWIS's side, leaning in. He is almost ridiculous country, almost like a caricature, with an absurdly cocked straw hat and trembling hands. Neither LEWIS nor ED knows quite what to do with him.

LEWIS

Look. Let me ask you something.

OLD MAN

You from the television?

(CONTINUED)

21 (Cont.)

LEWIS
Television?

OLD MAN
About the Dam.

LEWIS
No. Can you find us somebody to
drive these two cars down to
Aintry?

OLD MAN
What are you talking about?

LEWIS
(giving up and turning
to Ed)
Oh, shit.
(then to the old man)
Fill 'em up, will you?

The OLD MAN takes the hose and with some clattering pushes it into DREW's car. They get out and stretch their limbs and sniff the alien air. LEWIS spreads out his map on the hood and bends over it. The OLD MAN finds himself staring through the car's back window at DREW's guitar. He jerks his head back over his shoulder.

OLD MAN
Which a you plays guitar?

DREW looks over to him with a smile and a deprecatory shrug.

OLD MAN
Lonnie! Come on out 'chere.

DREW crosses to the OLD MAN and then follows his look back into the dark depths of the Texaco station. The others, having nothing stronger to focus their attention, turn to look as a shy ALBINO BOY sidles out of the gloomy interior cradling a battered five-string banjo.

THE MEN suffer the acute discomfort of suburban dwellers when confronted with the unseemly. The BOY's white skin looks luminous in the shadows. The OLD MAN laughs softly with pride and affection for THE BOY but also because he feels that the advantage has shifted away from the CITY MEN. LONNIE squints against the light. He is probably a half-wit, likely from a family inbred to the point of imbecility and Albinism. He smiles sweetly, expectantly through his squint. The OLD MAN looks up at DREW who is right by him and speaks softly in his ear.

(CONTINUED)

21 (Cont.1)

OLD MAN

Come on, Mister.. Play us a
little something.

DREW looks over to the others for guidance, especially to LEWIS, but they avoid his eyes, thoroughly confused. LEWIS turns abruptly and folds his map noisily.

DREW winds down the back window and takes out the guitar. LONNIE follows DREW closely, holding the banjo in whatever position DREW assumes with his guitar. His cross eyes are evident and rather endearing. He is innocent and ready. DREW smiles at him, starts to tune his guitar, setting his finger picks. LONNIE follows him, dragging a homemade capo up the neck of his banjo.

DREW

(gently, softly)

What are we going to play, Lonnie?

The OLD MAN is moving across to LEWIS's car, juddering the hose into the tank with his trembling hands.

OLD MAN

(laughing and shouting)

Anything! Play anything.

DREW looks around again, not quite sure as to whether or not he is going to contribute to a painful situation. Then he makes up his mind, crosses one leg over the other as he sits on the car hood and very carefully picks three notes in the key of C.

(These are the first notes of a piece called Duelling Banjos as recorded by Mike Russo and Ross Brentano in Portland, Oregon, in 1964. The piece is one in which guitar, and banjo "answer" each other by playing the same phrases alternately).

The OLD MAN, filling the tank, leans close to LEWIS, who pulls away from him.

OLD MAN

Lonnie don't know anything but banjo-picking. He ain't never been to school.

DREW dives into the piece, figuring as one would suppose, that he will go ahead and play the piece whether LONNIE joins him or not. The OLD MAN watches with a sly, knowing grin, waiting. LEWIS moves across breaking the OLD MAN's eyeline.

(CONTINUED)

21 (Cont.2)

LEWIS

What about drivers? Where can
we find drivers?

The OLD MAN moves past LEWIS, putting the hose back on the pump, LEWIS follows him, again interrupting his view, but the OLD MAN just leans this way or that, restoring his view of DREW and LONNIE over the mountain ranges of LEWIS's muscles.

OLD MAN

(shrugs)

You might try the Griner boys,
north of town. They might do it.

LEWIS having got what he wanted, turns away to his ceaseless map-reading.

BOBBY and ED watch the ALBINO BOY with growing fascination.

BOBBY

(whispers)

How is it these people up here are
always missing something.... a finger,
an eye, an arm or, 'in the head'. I
never saw a farmer yet who didn't have
something wrong with him. You'd think
it would be a healthy life.

As if to prove his point THREE or FOUR WEIRD LOOKING
HILLBILLIES have materialised out of the weeds to stand
at the edge of the concrete apron, aware of an approaching
event.

This ILL-ASSORTED GROUP clusters around these TWO MUSICIANS
in a dusty, forgotten or never-discovered filling station,
way off up in the mountains of Appalachia.

ED

Why look at Drew - a suburban hedge-
clipper, up here, doing this!

DREW has finished the sequence of chords that comprise the
piece, and starts at the beginning again.

This time the sound is different. For every phrase he plays
there is an echo. He does not look up from the guitar key-
board, but his face and attitude change, first to gratified
unbelief, and then to full conviction. The banjo comes on
stronger, perfectly answering each of his chords. The music
begins to sound good: to sound driving and confident and
gutsy: to catch the onlookers in its sweep and suck them into

(CONTINUED)

21 (Cont.3)

its vortex. It becomes a special, rare, experience and even LEWIS is held by it.

DREW is alternately finger-picking and flat-picking with the thumb. He goes faster and the boy goes right with him.

LONNIE's scratched child's hands move with beautiful musical economy. His face has the beatific vision of the idiot doing what he loves.

They play one more chorus, the loudest and best of all, and during this DREW moves off the car to LONNIE's side and they stand together listening closely to each other, finishing well, riding together.

DREW

God damn!

DREW stands upright, overwhelmed, totally happy. The others are on the point of applause, and it erupts not in clapping but in laughter.

DREW

God damn! I could play all day
with that guy.

The OLD MAN is laughing hard, with a strange stiff bending movement, from the waist, and a look of 'I told you' on his face. DREW, the big-faced decent city man goes forward to shake hands with the demented country boy, but the door has closed. There is no way in except through the music. He wags the BOY's limp hand. The OLD MAN slaps DREW's back, like a man who has just told a joke racked with mirth.

OLD MAN

What'd I tell you?

22. INT. CAR

DAY

ED is still happy from the music, but LEWIS is hunched forward, his hands crossed on the wheel, leaning on the car.

LEWIS

We've got to get water under us.

Oree has petered out into an occasional straggly building.

LEWIS spots a dilapidated garage ahead on the road. There is a rough wooden house attached to it and a sign reading: GRINER BROTHERS GARAGE. The two cars pull in. There is no one about.

23. EXT. GRINER'S GARAGE

DAY

The whole place is almost drowning in the trees and weeds around it. LEWIS leaps out of the car and knocks impatiently on the door of the house which is half-open. ED climbs out and dutifully joins him, but BOBBY and DREW remain in their car laughing soundlessly behind their windshield.

Through the open door a sliver of the house is visible, a picture of Jesus, a few beercans on the floor and in the deep shadows of the room an old woman is just visible in silhouette. A strange trick of light illuminates one of her eyes. The eye and its pouch of aged skin seems to hang independently in space, unconnected to a body.

OLD WOMAN

Curse you! Leave us be! Blust your eyes!

This seems to be what she is saying although in fact her speech is so country and slurred that the words are hard to make out.

ED

Jesus!

LEWIS shrugs it off. There is the sound of muffled hammering from the garage at the side of the house.

LEWIS

(pointing towards the garage)

Sounds like he's in there.

They move to the front door of the garage, but it is padlocked.

LEWIS quickly threads a way to the rear of the garage through a depressing wasteland of rusted farm implements, twisted cars, abandoned pistonless engines.

At the back of the garage they find a door sagging open. The sound of metal is much louder as it comes through the opening.

Without any hesitation at all, LEWIS plunges into the darkness of the garage. He is gone before ED makes up his mind to follow him, but he does, and goes in too. For a moment, there is nothing but the junky back of the garage, and the sound of metal being pounded.

24. INT. GRINER'S GARAGE

DAY

It is quite dark at first, but soon objects emerge mysteriously; a luminous green truck battery, cables and wires, a distributor and carburetor on a wooden bench, an anvil, an engine hoisted and dangling on a heavy greasy chain. Through all these things LEWIS and ED thread their way, and before them is disclosed a huge, country figure, a kind of red-necked Thor, pounding the rim of a truck wheel laid on its side on a bench.

Just as the figure is established in its half-light, an exclamation comes from it.

GRINER

Shit fire! God Almighty!

GRINER's figure bends, apparently injured, doubles up and makes for the door.

ED immediately presses himself into the wall to allow the agonised creature to pass into the light, but LEWIS, his powerful body silhouetted against the white light spilling through the door, seems to block GRINER's way. His position forces GRINER to look up at him. LEWIS having exacted this penance turns, elegant as a matador, letting the huge bull man pass. LEWIS has just the glint of a smile, the look of the competitive, compulsive games player.

25. EXT. REAR OF GARAGE

DAY

GRINER stands in the yard, spraddled-legged, holding his hurt hand. He looks up at LEWIS and ED, and it is impossible to tell as to whether the intense, terrible fierceness in his face is coming from his pain, or from their intrusion. Probably it is from both. He is an enormous country brutal-looking man, with no humor in him. He suggests nothing but brutality and stupidity. And enormous physical power. He is dressed in overall pants and a sleeveless undershirt, a train engineer's cap, and army boots, which are blackened with grease and unlaced.

LEWIS walks right up to him.

LEWIS

Can we do anything?

GRINER

(as though this were a perfectly logical question he rejects)

Naw. It ain't as bad as I thought.

GRINER pulls out a dirty handkerchief and wraps it around his hand.

(CONTINUED)

25 (Cont.)

GRINER

Whut do you want?

LEWIS

Could you and somebody else, maybe your brother, drive a couple of cars down to Aintry for us?

GRINER

Drive 'em down there for whut?

LEWIS

We want to take a canoe trip down the Cahulawasssee, and we'd like for our cars to be at Aintry when we get there day after tomorrow.

GRINER

A canoe trip?

LEWIS

That's right. A canoe trip.

GRINER

What the hail you want to fuck around with that river for?

LEWIS

(firmly)

Because it's there.

This is for ED, and LEWIS throws him a look.

GRINER

It's there, all right. If you git in there and can't git out, you're gonna wish it wudn't.

The situation is suddenly dangerous and out of hand.

ED glances at them both anxiously.

ED

Listen, Lewis. To hell with it. Let's go back to town and play golf.

LEWIS pays no attention to ED, but grinds GRINER with his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

25 (Cont.1)

LEWIS
(to Griner)
Well, can you do it? We'll
give you thirty dollars.

GRINER
Fifty.

LEWIS
(calmly and
deliberately, and
very distinctly)
Fifty, my ass.

LEWIS moves directly up to GRINER in what is quite obviously
a challenge to GRINER to do something physical, if he's of
a mind to.

ED pulls at LEWIS's arm.

ED
Lewis, Lewis. For God's sake.
Don't play games.

GRINER
How about forty?

LEWIS
(turning finally to Ed)
Are you good for ten?

ED hands a note to LEWIS who passes it on to GRINER with
some others.

GRINER
Good enough.

GRINER takes the bills and stuffs them in his pocket. He
melts into the rear of the house. Lewis gives ED a quick
grin.

LEWIS and ED move around the garage, back to the car.

ED
(lowers his voice)
You reckon we'll ever see these cars
again? This is a rough son-of-a-bitch.

As they come round to the front of the garage, DREW and
BOBBY appear moving tentatively towards them.

(CONTINUED)

25 (Cont.2)

DREW

You in some kind of trouble?

LEWIS thrusts through them towards his car, dismissing their nervousness.

LEWIS

It's all fixed.

The others follow LEWIS and hang about him uncertainly by his car.

BOBBY

We heard this cussing and shouting.

LEWIS

It's O.K.

BOBBY is about to go on, but looks up and stops. The others also become circumspect and in the foreground the huge arms and chests of the GRINER BROTHERS cross towards their run-down pick-up truck followed by the eyes of the city men.

The pick-up truck pulls out and in the cab, besides the BROTHERS, there is quite definitely a THIRD MAN. His features are in shadow, there is just a suggestion of a figure in a baseball cap - and nothing more.

26. EXT. ROAD ABOVE OREE DAY

LEWIS'S car accelerates out in front of the truck with tyres crying out. DREW is content to tag along behind.

27. INT. LEWIS'S CAR DAY

ED

Better let them show us.

LEWIS

(scornfully)

Hell, we know 'bout where it is.

Just ahead LEWIS sees a suggestion of a dirt road going off to the left. He slews the car round on to it. The car jaws and bumps badly. ED tries not to look apprehensive without quite succeeding.

LEWIS bumps and bangs down into a kind of hollow where the road gives out.

Nothing is there but the rock-chimney of a burned down house.

(CONTINUED)

27 (Cont.)

LEWIS

Well, we screwed up, sure enough.

ED

Why not just let them show us
where the river is?

LEWIS

You're missing the whole point, Ed.

He hurls the car around on full lock and claws back to the road where the truck and the other car wait. As LEWIS comes alongside the pick-up, GRINER leans out of his cab.

GRINER

Where you goin' city boy?

LEWIS

We'll get there.

GRINER

Ain't nothin' but the biggest
river in the State.

ED hides a kind of smile, but LEWIS is undaunted, not angry or rattled at all. He spurts forward again, the canoe rattling and banging on the roof.

The land is flatter, and the road runs between stumps of pine trees. LEWIS gestures at the stumps.

LEWIS

Land's been sawmilled. Map shows
an old logging road.

28. EXT. TRACK TO RIVER

DAY

A track leads off into it. LEWIS drives in without slackening speed. The track immediately clips down a steep incline. The road obviously doubles as a river bed at flood-time, its surface gouged out and at the same time smoothed over.

ED braces himself against the dashboard. Bushes swirl at the open windows of the car, flying in, then whipping out again. The underside of the car drags and crunches on brush and gravel.

Suddenly the car is stopped and the branches become still, lying across ED'S chest.

The car has stalled.

(CONTINUED)

28 (Cont.)

LEWIS

Listen!

They keep perfectly still for a moment, swallowed in the dark green belly of the forest.

Unmistakably, the sound of running water.

LEWIS grins and his grin widens as the sound seems to grow. LEWIS is himself again.

LEWIS

You have to get lost before you can find it.

They clamber out, LEWIS leaping, ED rather apprehensively.

ED

You reckon there are any snakes around here?

LEWIS

Plenty. Watch where you put your feet.

ED catches a glimpse of himself in the rear window of the station wagon, where the dark equipment inside makes the window more like a mirror. He buckles on his Army web belt with the big knife on it and the coil of green nylon rope.

He pulls a wry face at himself which is meant to self-mocking, as though he were putting himself on by acting this way, wearing these clothes, being here in the woods.

ED looks around for LEWIS, and doesn't find him. He looks in this direction, then that. Finally he sees LEWIS momentarily further down the slope.

ED scrambles after him - squeamishly, as though afraid of getting his tennis shoes dirty, he crowhops, dodging the pools of water, over to where LEWIS is peering at something through a drapery of bushes and willows.

29. EXT. THE RIVER

DAY

ED comes up to LEWIS, and LEWIS dramatically opens the willows wider, revealing a leaf-framed view of the river. The sound swells up.

The river is pretty, beautiful even - but not as wide as one

(CONTINUED)

29 (Cont.)

might have thought it would be. It is green and clean, and not threatening at all.

LEWIS

There it is. The real thing.

ED

Pretty. Pretty indeed.

The willows swish back into place, closing off the view of the stream.

30. EXT. EMBARKATION POINT

DAY

BOBBY and LEWIS have the aluminium canoe on their backs and stagger down to the water, leaves lashing this four-legged headless beast.

THE GRINERS watch from their truck with derisive fascination, making no attempt to help.

BOBBY and LEWIS lift the canoe down awkwardly into the water, where ED takes it from them. The other canoe, the green wooded one, is floating and loaded up already. ED holds the canoe and is pushed deeper into the water, nearly to his waist. He pulls his way back, but the mud holds him.

ED

It's got me.

LEWIS

What's got you.

ED

It!

LEWIS grins and turns back to loading and fussing with the gear, as DREW gingerly hands down his guitar to ED.

DREW

(imitating the country
talk in an exaggerated
way)

I'm a goin' with you, and not with Mr.
Lewis Medlock. I done seen how he
drove these roads he don't know nothin'
about.

The gear is loaded now, the tents, the beer, the food, the bedrolls, the bows and arrows.

LEWIS and BOBBY climb into the other canoe wearing their life jackets. BOBBY is incredibly awkward, LEWIS easy and competent.

(CONTINUED)

30 (Cont.)

LEWIS

O.K. We're ready.

Deep in the woods, the sound of a car starting.

BOBBY

I'll bet they can't get the cars
back up that hill.

DREW and ED are strapping on their life-jackets.

DREW

That's a nice thought.

BOBBY picks up his paddle gingerly and throws a somewhat desperate look over his shoulder as LEWIS pushes away from the bank.

BOBBY

What the hell are we going to do
if we come off this river and
there's no cars down at what's-its-
name?

LEWIS

They'll be there. Don't worry about
a thing.

LEWIS drives the canoe out with long sweeps while BOBBY holds his paddle uncertainly.

31. EXT. THE RIVER

DAY

DREW and ED settle in awkwardly and push off. DREW picks up his paddle and looks at it uncertainly. He makes a practise stroke through the air.

DREW

This.... how you hold this thing?

ED struggling himself, alternately paddling and pushing at the mud.

ED

You hold it.... like you hold it.

The water is fairly placid and slow here, but moving just the same. They feel the river take hold of the canoes, take them over. Just the sound of the water. Trees hang over the river, holding back the sun, turning the water inky.

(CONTINUED)

31 (Cont.)

LEWIS and BOBBY have got ahead, while ED and DREW shift about and experiment with their paddles, laughing at their awkwardness just like suburban fathers on a boating lake in the park.

32. EXT. GENTLE RAPIDS

DAY

The water quickens a little, and the speed of the canoe visibly picks up. So far, ED and DREW are doing all right, and they begin to know it. They are getting a rudimentary sense of what they need to do.

ED

Try a stronger pull. I think we're getting the hang of it.

A broader expanse of the river opens in front of them. The other canoe is still well ahead. The river is not particularly rough here, but the part before them is a little rougher than at the place where they put in.

ED and DREW manoeuvre through some lively, interesting but not dangerous water, none of it white, but urgent and vigorous.

Then they run one little stretch that is very slightly dangerous, where the water begins to foam up, and they make it nicely.

DREW turns backward to ED as much as he is able to do.

DREW

Hey, hey! How about this!

ED

(pleased)

This is some kind of all right, huh?

They go along, in calmer water now. ED ploughs easily along, enjoying things.

DREW

Well, for god's sake! What's wrong up there, Tarzan?

Way ahead, the other canoe is swung broadside to the current. The action of LEWIS and BOBBY in the other canoe is confused and even a little desperate. The canoe is turning all the way around, and begins to travel downstream backward.

DREW turns around, again only so much as he is able to in his position, and he is laughing sincerely and sympathetically.

(CONTINUED)

32 (Cont.)

Ed is more concerned about the others, but he smiles too, and shakes his head ruefully, as though he expected this.

They are catching up with the green canoe, as LEWIS tries to bring the bow around.

LEWIS

(to Bobby, and a
little impatiently)

Let me do it! Take your paddle out
of the water and I'll bring it
around.

He doesn't though. Just as the bow is beginning to swing downstream, they drift on to a couple of big rocks and hang there. LEWIS hunches in his seat, trying to get the canoe off the rocks that way, doesn't succeed, then steps out into the water, which comes up to his thigh. He rights the canoe by brute force just as ED and DREW come alongside. They move into the lead and LEWIS clambers back in and sets off again.

33. EXT. OREE BRIDGE

DAY

As they pass under the bridge, one or two PEOPLE look down at them, watching impassively. DREW spots the ALBINO BOY amongst them. He waves up enthusiastically and getting no answer from THE BOY, holds his paddle like a guitar and pretends to play it. THE BOY stares but makes no response.

They pass under the bridge. DREW turns and looks back. THE BOY has crossed over and still watches them from the other side of the bridge.

DREW

Spooky kid.

They move through the part of the river lying directly under the town of Oree. It is evidently used as a kind of junk heap where the townspeople throw away anything they don't want.

The river bed is littered with old tires, engines, wheels, old refrigerators, cookers, and so on. There are also several startlingly bright broken things of plastic: pitchers, water-containers, and the like. ED looks down at an electric blue plastic jar that catches the late afternoon sun and shoots up a jarring artificial light.

ED looks around: something is making him uneasy without his knowing what it is.

He brings his paddle out of the water, and there is a feather stuck to the end of it.

(CONTINUED)

33 (Cont.)

ED peers intently at something in the river. He can't quite make it out, but finally he does. It is a chicken head, ludicrous and repulsive, spinning aimlessly in the water beside the canoe, turning over and over, fixing ED every now and then with its open eye.

ED still gazes into the river while he paddles. The canoe passes over a huge ghostly white underwater thing.

It is a big rock with a log wedged against it. Both rock and log are covered with feathers, wavering, hairy, and repulsive in a sort of uncanny representation of human nausea: a perfect image of this.

DREW

Poultry processing plant.

ED

G-u-u-gh!

DREW

(paddling easily
along, not worried
about a thing)

Man, you got to get used to these things! You're a big boy now!

ED

You get used to 'em!

A little further down, to make things worse, an effluent pipe issues into the river and soon they are riding on a river of blood: chicken blood.

ED

(not able to contain
his disgust)

Je-sus!

DREW

(turning around as
well as he can, in
a manner which is
that of joking,
but not entirely)

What's the matter? Don't you like fried chicken?

ED

(resignedly)

I used to.

34. EXT. STRETCH OF RAPIDS

DAY

They go around a turn, and the river changes completely. There is a long series of little rapids, lively and interesting looking, stretching out of sight ahead.

DREW

Well for the Lord's sake, would you look at that! What do we do now?

They are delighted but apprehensive too,

ED

Lewis says head right for the fastest water. Try to keep us going right down the middle, through the channel and between the rocks. That's all I know to do.

DREW

Ay, ay! Let's go there!

DREW digs in enthusiastically, the canoe picks up speed and starts through the first of the rapids.

They are sucked in to battle with the river, trying to keep the canoe straight in the channel, trying to avoid running over rocks.

During all this, ED is silent, working hard, but now and then DREW gives an exultant whoop, like a cowboy breaking a horse.

There is just the right mixture of exhilaration and danger. DREW and ED are equal to coping with this stretch of the river, but only just barely. There is a time when they just about capsize. They ship some water, and DREW calls out Uh-oh! But somehow they right the canoe and continue. At the last place on this stretch, they go right over a big boulder and come down on the river with a tremendous WHUMP.

The rapids give way to calmer water. DREW and ED adjust themselves in their seats, and re-arrange the equipment which has been shaken loose and out of place.

DREW

Old Lewis, by damn! He knows something!

ED

That was some ride, eh?

DREW

You better believe it was some ride!
You O.K.?

ED

Pretty good. Yes, sir! Sure am!

They back paddle and swing around to get a view of LEWIS and BOBBY careering through the rapids. They do pretty well, too.

(CONTINUED)

34 (Cont.)

LEWIS drives his canoe up alongside the other one with long strokes. He has taken it in a very blase way but BOBBY is honestly excited and thrilled.

BOBBY

Wow! It's better than Disneyland.

DREW

Wow's right.

ED

(to Lewis)

Don't you think we ought to make camp pretty soon?

LEWIS

Yeah, I do. I'm afraid if we go any farther the banks might begin to get too high for us to get out on.

35.

EXT. CAMP SITE

NIGHT

It is now very dark, and a couple of flashlights have been hung in a bush so as to provide an area of concentrated light. This device renders various effects of light and dark and mood and tone, as one after the other of the men passes through this lit-up area, stays in it for a moment, then melts back into the general dark.

The upcast light of the flashlights gives unexpected qualities to the faces of these men. It makes BOBBY look vaguely Oriental and DREW'S face more pitted, as the shadow adheres to his face. Only LEWIS is instantly recognizable, though changed somewhat too. He looks more determined and authoritative than ever, with also an admixture of ruthlessness that does not show up so well by daylight.

There is no sound during this except single notes picked out on DREW'S guitar.

DREW is now tuning his guitar in earnest, using both the regular method and also harmonic tuning, which gives a beautiful bell-like sound.

BOBBY comes over to them and hands them a paper cup apiece, and then pours a big drink of bourbon for each. He disappears, and LEWIS takes a generous swallow as ED sips, then LEWIS moves to the fire and begins to encourage it. Steaks are frying. The fire picks up and casts its flickering, insubstantial light over the scene.

(CONTINUED)

35 (Cont.)

ED goes and lies on the bank by himself, while LEWIS cooks.
DREW plays a soft chord, a minor.

DREW

I've always wanted to do this, only
I didn't know it.

He picks part of a very country-sounding blue-grass piece,
then breaks off.

DREW

It's woods music. Don't you think so?

ED

Sure do.

He plays on, switching around, fragments of blues and blue-grass, then a few chords of "Duelling Banjos." He leaves gaps for the banjo to answer, looking out into the woods, but none comes. During the music BOBBY pours himself another drink and ED one. He offers the bottle to DREW, but DREW shakes his head, being happy with his music, and wanting nothing else, nothing to interfere with it.

LEWIS brings over dishes of the food he has cooked, and the three of them eat with great relish while DREW continues to play.

DREW stops, and they all sit silently.

LEWIS

(in what is for
him a soft voice)

You know, we don't have too many more
years for this kind of thing.

ED

Oh, I guess not. But I can tell you. I'm
glad we came. I'm damned glad. This is
a great place to be, right now. The greatest.

They are relaxed, euphoric, except for LEWIS. He still has an ear cocked for the voices of the night, the sounds of the forest. He is watching out, he is ready. But this just makes the others more secure and easy.

BOBBY

(a little drunk)

It's true Lewis, what you said. There's
something in the woods and the water
that we lost in the city.

LEWIS

We didn't lose it, we sold it.

(CONTINUED)

35 (Cont.1)

BOBBY gets up and stretches.

BOBBY

But at least technology produced the
air mattress - or as it's better known
in camp circles - the instant broad.

ED

(moving to the
tent with a yawn)

To say nothing of that nylon/kapok
miracle - the sleeping bag.

LEWIS has been standing a little apart from the others. Now
he raises his arm in a gesture which says keep still and be
quiet. They freeze in their stretching or stooping or crouch-
ing postures and listen. The noises of the night amplify as
they strain to hear - the creaks and cries, the sighing trees,
all indecipherable to a blunt city ear.

LEWIS is absolutely motionless, yet coiled up, ready to
spring.

The ease and well-being drains out of them as the forest be-
comes threatening, full of menace.

Suddenly LEWIS slips into the black woods. He makes no sound
and he is gone as though he never existed.

BOBBY

(shaking his
head exasperated)

This guy is unbelievable. All day
he's been an Indian Brave and now he
has to play Tarzan.

ED

(still apprehensive)

He knows the woods, though. He really
does.

DREW

He's learnt them. He doesn't feel
them. That's Lewis' problem. He wants
to be 'one' with nature and he's not.

BOBBY

So we have to endure these melodramatic
games.

They look about them nervously. They feel vulnerable and
abandoned.

(CONTINUED)

35 (Cont.2)

ED

(wryly)

Do you realize if it wasn't for this
madman we'd all be home in bed with
doors locked against the night.

BOBBY

And armfulls of warm women.

They are like mutinous schoolboys. They start to giggle.
Suddenly LEWIS materialises at their side. BOBBY starts with
surprise.

BOBBY

Jesus, Lewis. You scared the shit
out of me.

ED

What was it, Lewis?

LEWIS surveys the camp site, the firelight licking the long
tree shadows. He is very calm.

LEWIS

Humans. They were watching us.

DREW

Did you catch up with them?

LEWIS

No.

BOBBY

So what. I'm going to sleep. Fuck it.

DREW

Maybe it was just the Gods, Lewis, out
walking in the forest.

ED

Well, to the sleeping bags, men.

LEWIS looks out over the river as though with some secret
knowledge.

BOBBY

Had my first wet dream in a sleeping
bag. I surely did.

ED

(with interest, but
not a whole lot)

How was it?

(CONTINUED)

35 (Cont.3)

BOBBY

Great. There's no repeating it.

There is a long sigh, and then no sound.

36. EXT. CAMPING GROUND

DAWN

The two tents lie under a shroud of mist which has come up over the river and spilled out through the forest.

It is very still. ED slips out of his tent. He wears long Johns the colour of fog and he is scarcely visible.

37. EXT. RAVINE ABOVE CAMP

DAWN

As he begins to walk stealthily away from the tents, he reveals his bow in his right hand.

He moves up along the small ravine or draw that runs back inland. He moves very cautiously, the bow always ready, but there is a distinct feeling that he is play-acting. He doesn't really think he is going to come on any game.

He goes along like this for perhaps twenty or thirty careful steps, until the land begins to rise and the fog, as a consequence, starts to thin out.

ED is more visible now, a ridiculous figure in long underwear in the woods, and he, too, obviously feels himself to be pretty absurd.

He turns around to start back down, somewhat angry with himself.

He is getting back into the river-fog now, when to the left, there is a slight movement. He stops and peers as he tries to make out what is causing it. Gradually it becomes apparent that it is a little deer, a spike buck probably.

ED slowly raises the bow, scarcely daring to breathe, scarcely believing in his luck, and not knowing, really whether he will actually shoot or not. The orange frame of thread on his bowstring comes back as he draws the bow, until it is framing his eye. A great flush of excitement comes over ED and he starts to tremble.

At first the sight is not on the deer, and he tries to frame the animal slowly, very slowly. The deer is browsing, not looking up, and ED brings him right to the center of the blurred frame of string.

(CONTINUED)

37 (Cont.)

ED releases. But there is a quick but unmistakable knowledge that he has botched the shot, after all that preparation. His left hand, bow-hand, has jerked just as the shot went.

ED

God damn it.

He snatches loose another arrow from the bow-quiver. He draws again. The deer, which has evidently jumped a little farther away, watches him, but the peep sight is swinging erratically, and doesn't frame the deer, but once or twice almost does. The bow twangs as ED releases, and the deer jumps and soundlessly vanishes.

ED very deliberately throws the bow into a bush, just as a golfer would toss a club.

ED

Well, that's that!

He retrieves the bow, and starts down, noisily, awkwardly, not looking out for deer any more, and then he is back at the tents. This mist is thinning out; it is by now almost gone.

38.

EXT. CAMP SITE

DAY

DREW is folding his bedroll. He laughs at the sight of ED and he calls into one of the tents for BOBBY, who is irritably dressing.

DREW

Hey, Bobby. Look what came out of the forest.

BOBBY

(without humor
or irony)

Yeah.

LEWIS is making a fire with twigs. He turns and sees ED and gives a sharp look at the two empty slots in the bow quiver.

LEWIS

(nodding at bow)
What about it, buddy?

ED

(digustedly)
I got a shot.

(CONTINUED)

38 (Cont.)

LEWIS
(straightening)
You did?

ED
I did. A spectacular miss at fifteen yards. I boosted my bow hand, like a god-damned idiot. I just exploded, I psyched out. Something said raise your hand, and I did.

LEWIS
Well, that's too bad. We could'a had meat.

39. EXT. RIVER BANK DAY

ED sits in the loaded canoe, holding the bank as BOBBY climbs and crumples into the bow.

ED looks at BOBBY apprehensively, then turns to call back to LEWIS.

ED
We're gonna sail on out. We'll take it slow.

LEWIS is still packing gear into their canoe, while DREW douses the campfire.

When they get out into midstream it becomes evident as to just how inept BOBBY is. He's in terrible shape physically, as he is unco-ordinated, he is unwilling, he is disagreeable.

BOBBY
I hope to God we can get off this fucking river today.

ED
Ah, now. It's not all that bad!

BOBBY
It's not? Listen: mosquitoes ate me up last night. My bites have got bites. I'm catching a fucking cold from sleeping on the fucking ground, and I'm hungry as hell for something that tastes good. And I don't mean sorghum.

BOBBY starts to paddle wildly.

(CONTINUED)

39 (Cont.)

ED

Steady down. It's not gonna do your
cold any good to dump in this river.

BOBBY

Fuck it. Let's get on with it. I'm
tired of this woods scene. I'm tired
of shitting in a hole in the ground.
This is for the Indians.

They go along for a while, not speaking, and they make some-
what better progress.

40.

EXT. THE RIVER

DAY

The canoes cut through a dazzling silver sundrenched river.

The land gets wilder and more thickly-wooded. A heron
glides out low over the river lazily following its contours.

The river is placid and ED must paddle steadily to make pro-
gress. He keeps having to wipe sweat out of his eyes. He
squints at the sunfilled river. He scoops up water and
rinses his face.

ED and BOBBY swallow beer.

The bow lies in the canoe and the river slides past it, with
its black and green, orange-feathered arrows, the heads
shining with deadly light.

LEWIS' canoe is out of sight as ED and BOBBY pass through
dense, fir forest - silent, mysterious, stifling.

A SNAKE slips into the water and swims with exactly the same
motion as crawling on land, across in front of the canoe,
then disappears, still in the same motion and at the same
speed, in the weeds on the other side.

BOBBY

(speaking back over
his shoulder)

Let's for God's sake not turn over here!

ED

No, buddy. We won't.

They are now getting awfully hot and tired. They finish the
last two beers of the six-pack. BOBBY throws his can care-
lessly into the river, and ED carefully holds his underwater
until it fills, and then lets it go down.

ED keeps shifting around uncomfortably, trying to ease his
back, his right hip. He keeps running his tongue around in-

(CONTINUED)

40 (Cont.)

side his dry mouth, and picking up water from the river and putting it on his head.

BOBBY

(half-turning again)

Let's put in for a little while. This is getting to me.

ED

(looking backward for the other canoe and not seeing it)

I'm for that. We can wait for the others to catch up. Maybe they've got some more beer.

41. EXT. RESTING PLACE

DAY

They pull in and tie up to the bank, then climb out and sit down, relieved to be in the shade. BOBBY unties a handkerchief from around his neck and leans down and sops it in the river. He sits beside ED, and they both peer upriver.

BOBBY

(squinting)

Wonder what the hell Lewis and Drew are doing up there, anyway.

ED

Probably the same thing we are. They'll be along in a little while.

BOBBY rubs at his face and neck with the handkerchief. ED gets up, and bends down and touches his toes a couple of times to get the kinks out. He peers upriver once again, doesn't see anything, then turns back to say something to BOBBY.

Before his gaze comes to rest on BOBBY, it stops on TWO MEN at the edge of the woods, shadowy and very silent. One of them may have a gun; but this is not clear yet.

ED

(peering to make them out better)

Bobby!

The TWO MEN emerge from the brush, their limbs curiously akin to the tangled branches from which they come. The taller of them does indeed have a gun; an old, old shotgun.

BOBBY turns, sees the MEN, and gets up slowly, brushing at himself as he does so.

BOBBY

(to the men, and with a lot more confidence than he feels)

How goes it?

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.)

THE MEN are still stepping forward, with a curious tiptoeing, sideways walk, as though stepping around something that no one but them can see is there.

If there were ever any degenerate red-necks, they are these two. One of them is about fifty-five, in overalls and a filthy work shirt. He has a mangy whitish beard. The other one, the man with the gun, is younger, and his toothlessness should be the most obvious thing about him. He is not wearing overalls, but just a ragged, dirty shirt and pants. They keep coming.

The OLDER MAN comes up to ED, and gets himself ridiculously close. The faces are no more than four or five inches apart. There is silence, while the man looks fiercely and ED tries to think of something to say.

BEARDED MAN

(revealing awful stumps
of teeth, orange and broken)

What the hail you think you're doing?

ED

(as matter-of-factly
as he can.

Going down river. We've been going
since yesterday.

BEARDED MAN looks at TALL MAN, and something significant seems to pass between them.

ED

(trying desperately
to tell his story)

We hope we can get to Aintree some time
late today or early tomorrow.

BEARDED MAN

Aintree?

BOBBY

(with something of his
smart-aleck city manner)

Sure. This river just runs one way,
cap'n. Haven't you heard?

BEARDED MAN

You ain't never goin' to get down to
Aintree.

ED

(really startled and
frightened now, but
trying to bluff it out)

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.1)

BEARDED MAN

Because this river don't go to Aintry.
 You done taken a wrong turn somewhere.
 This-here river don't go nowhere near
 Aintry.

ED

Where does it go?

BEARDED MAN

It goes... it goes.

TALL MAN

(very toothlessly)

It goes to Circle Gap. 'Bout fifty
 miles.

BEARDED MAN

(turning his face

close to Ed's again,

even closer than before)

Boy, you don't know where you are.

ED

(resignedly)

Well, we're going where the river's
 going. We'll come out somewhere,
 I reckon.

With a very slight move, the TALL MAN gets himself nearer
 to BOBBY.

ED

(trying to be as

convincing and

harmless and as

full of good will

toward strangers

as he can)

Hell, we sure don't want any trouble.
 If you've got a still near here, that's
 fine with us. We could never tell any-
 body where it is, because you know
 something? You're right. We don't
 know where we are.

TALL MAN

(seeming honestly

surprised)

A stee-ul?

(CONTINUED)

ED

(as friendly as possible, but how friendly is that?)

Sure. If you're making whiskey, we'll buy some from you. We could sure use it.

BEARDED MAN

(squarely into Ed's face)

Do you know what the hail you're talking about?

ED

I don't know what you're talking about.

BEARDED MAN

You done said something about makin' whiskey. You think we're makin' whiskey. Now come on. Ain't that right?

ED

(genuinely outdone by this time)

Look. I don't know what you're doing, and I don't care. It's not any of my business.

The TALL MAN reaches over and feels BOBBY's arm, in a strangely delicate gesture. BOBBY jerks back, and when he does the barrel of the shotgun comes up, just a little, but definitely.

ED

(as though the interview were over)

We'd better get on with it. We've got a long ways to go.

TALL MAN

(very decisively, all pretence now past)

You ain't goin' nowhere.

The TALL MAN levels the shotgun right at ED's chest.

TALL MAN

(meaning it)

You come on back in here 'less you want your guts all over this-here woods.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.3)

ED half-raises his arms as though playing a part in a movie about badmen. He cannot believe that this is happening. The four of them go inland a few steps from the river, behind a screen of bushes and weeds.

TALL MAN

Back up to that saplin'.

ED

(indicating a tree
with his raised hands)

This one?

ED backs up to a small tree, and the TALL MAN, working quickly and expertly, takes off ED's web belt with the knife and nylon rope on it, lets the belt out and puts it around ED and the tree with the buckle on the other side of the tree. He takes the knife out of the belt, slowly, and stands looking at it with the shotgun pointing at BOBBY.

TALL MAN

(mock admiringly)

Look at that! I bet that'll shave
ha'r.

BEARDED MAN

Why'ont you try it? Looks like that'n's
got plenty of it. 'Cept on his head.

Very deliberately the TALL MAN takes hold of the zipper to ED's coveralls, and, with a quick movement, like tearing ED apart, he zips it down to the belt with which ED is tied to the tree.

BEARDED MAN

Good God Almighty! He's like a god-
damned monkey. You ever see anything
like that?

TALL MAN

(placing the point
of the knife under
ED's chin and forcing
him to hold his head
unnaturally high)

You ever had your balls cut off, you
fuckin' ape?

ED

(obviously terrified but
trying to hold onto some-
thing of himself, his pride)

Not lately. What good would they do you?

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.4)

TALL MAN scrapes across ED's chest with blade, and holds up the knife with hair and a little blood on it.

TALL MAN

Sharp, all right. Could be sharper,
but it's sharp.

TALL MAN begins to breathe faster, panting, and his face takes on a malevolent expression. He looks, quite literally, as if he would do anything: is just about to do it, in fact. Suddenly, and very unexpectedly he raises the knife over his head and drives it down with all his might, with a furious and final movement. It appears to have entered ED.

ED responds in shocked horror as though he has been mortally wounded. - But the knife has in fact been struck into the tree right next to ED's head.

THE TWO MEN now converge on BOBBY. The BEARDED MAN takes BOBBY by the shoulder and turns him to face downstream.

BEARDED MAN

(very matter-of-
fact)

Now let's you just drop them pants.

BOBBY

(afraid to
comprehend)

Drop....?

TALL MAN

(putting muzzle of
shotgun under
Bobby's ear)

Just take 'em right on off.

BOBBY

(weakly)

I mean, what's this all....?

BEARDED MAN

Don't say nothin'. Just do it.

THE TALL MAN shoves at BOBBY's head with the gun, suddenly and viciously. The TALL MAN's actions are abrupt and deadly. BOBBY slowly unbuckles his belt and unbuttons his pants. He takes them off, looking around ridiculously for a place to put them down.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.5)

BEARDED MAN
(indicating Bobby's
undershorts)

Them panties too.

BOBBY takes off his shorts like a boy undressing for the first time in a gym.

TALL MAN
(gesturing with gun)
See that log? Walk over yonder.

BOBBY walks uncertainly over to a big rotten log on the ground and stands there: just BOBBY and the log, in some sort of as-yet-undivulged relationship.

TALL MAN
Now git on down crost it.

He puts the gun muzzle right under BOBBY's right ear.

ED watches horrified, the knife stuck in the tree next to his head, a little blood trickling from under his chin. He shifts and gasps for breath against the tightness of the belt.

The BEARDED MAN unfastens his pants while the TALL MAN stands impassively over BOBBY, pointing the gun.

ED's face again, waiting to see and not wanting to, averting his eyes as BOBBY's first scream comes. There is a note of dreadful surprise in it. More screams come of animal pain, becoming rhythmic.

ED looks straight before him now, his eyes deadened and without hope, not responding to the screams anymore.

Then his look changes, his focus shifts. His face takes on an expression of unbelief and the beginnings of a fantastic kind of hope.

Through a slit in a curtain of leaves is the green canoe with LEWIS and DREW in it. They both have their paddles out of the water. Then the canoe disappears, as though it had never been. ED shakes his head as though he believes he may be hallucinating.

ED looks back toward the bushes, as the BEARDED MAN rises, a little unsteadily, to his feet. There are no more screams. The BEARDED MAN makes a long strange sigh, as he stands there buttoning his pants. There is a glimpse of BOBBY rolling in pain under the bushes.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.6)

After they reorganise themselves for a moment, the TALL MAN and the BEARDED MAN, without saying a word, turn from BOBBY and advance with dreadful purpose toward the tree where ED is tied. ED watches them come, step by step, the TALL MAN still with the gun.

The BEARDED MAN goes around behind the tree. ED and the tree jerk violently, and ED suddenly falls free. He almost stumbles, but brings up quickly, for the gun-muzzle is just under his nose.

TALL MAN

You're hairy as a god-damned dog,
ain't you?

ED

(gasping, resigned to
anything but having
his head blown off)
Some dogs, I suppose.

TALL MAN

(half turning to
Bearded Man)
Now what the hail

BEARDED MAN

Ain't no hair in his mouth.

TALL MAN

(with a terrible,
toothless grin)
That's the truth. Hold this on him.

The TALL MAN extends his hand with gun in it to the BEARDED MAN, all the time still looking straight at ED.

TALL MAN

(with deadly
seriousness)
Fall down on your knees boy. You
gonna do a little praying. And you
better pray good.

TALL MAN begins to unbutton his pants. ED goes down slowly to his knees, the BEARDED MAN gets ready to position himself to hold the gun on ED, the TALL MAN loosening his pants.

There is an odd sound, a kind of quick slap-snap: a sound like a quick, sharp indrawn breath.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.7)

The BEARDED MAN makes a loud involuntary surprised gasp, like that of a man with the wind knocked out of him unexpectedly. He does not yet look down.

ED looks sharply at the BEARDED MAN's face, and then quickly at his chest. A foot and a half of bright red arrow is protruding from the middle of it.

They all three hang motionless for a moment, too amazed to act. The gun starts to fall from the BEARDED MAN's hand. ED is nearest it, and he grabs for it, clumsily but with the strength of panic. The TALL MAN also reaches for it, and even touches it briefly, but ED has a better grip, this is instantaneously recognized by both of them, and then the TALL MAN leaps away into the bushes and is gone. The leaves do not even tremble where he disappears.

ED rises, transfigured by terror and by the turn events have taken. He is beast-like with the power of having the gun. He wraps the string the gun uses for a trigger around his hand and swings the barrel to cover the woods and everything in it: to be able to blast whatever will come.

BOBBY still tightly curled up in his private pain begins to comprehend the situation has altered.

The BEARDED MAN is standing stock still, with his feet wide apart. He reaches down with a trembling, broken-nailed hand and touches the shaft of the arrow delicately.

He falls to his knees and then to his side, rolling back and forth, spitting and gritting his teeth. Then he gets, with awful comic seriousness, back onto his feet again, this time with his lips red with blood and drooling saliva and blood. He turns toward the woods and takes a couple of halting steps toward them, and then seems to change his mind and turns back to ED, holding out one hand like an Old Testament prophet about to divulge a secret to one of the chosen.

ED makes the decision to fire. He begins to pull out the string, utter determination on his face.

But there is no need. Suddenly the BEARDED MAN falls, partly on his face and partly on his side, his face coming to rest on the tops of ED's white tennis shoes. He has a bubble of blood in his mouth, red as an apple.

ED lowers the gunbarrel a little.

ED
(shaking his head
in utter disbelief)

Well.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.8)

BOBBY

(from the ground,
and still half in
the bushes)

Lord God. Lord God.

ED looks down at the BEARDED MAN. The silver of the aluminium arrow-shaft and the fancy blue-and-silver marking of the white-feathered arrow stick out of his back.

ED peers into the woods, swinging the half-lowered gun back and forth, and nothing else happens.

Then there is a faint stirring in the bushes. ED swings towards it. LEWIS comes cautiously forward, another arrow on the string, his bow at the ready. He comes slowly into the clearing. DREW is behind him, holding a canoe paddle like a baseball bat.

LEWIS walks out between ED and BOBBY, and looks down at the BEARDED MAN. He puts his bow-tip on a leaf and gazes at it, about to say something.

LEWIS

(meditatively)

Well, now, how about this? I mean,
just.... how about this?

DREW moves to BOBBY and crouches down beside him. He puts his hand on BOBBY's shoulder, very sympathetic and gentle. BOBBY glances at him with a look of gratitude. Finally BOBBY gets painfully up, and DREW helps him. Dazed, furious and incongruous, BOBBY picks up his pants and shorts, fumbling takes a handkerchief from a pocket, and goes back behind the bushes.

Meanwhile, LEWIS leans on his bow and gazes out over the river. When he speaks, it is decisively, but distant.

LEWIS

I figured it was the only thing to do.

ED

(not sure as
all that)

I suppose it was. I thought we'd had it. I tell you I did. I thought sure they'd kill us.

LEWIS

Probably they would have. The penalty for sodomy in this state is death, anyway. And at the point of a gun.... No, they wouldn't have let you go. Why should they?

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.9)

ED

What are we going to do with him?

DREW comes up washing his hands with dirt and beating them against the sides of his legs.

DREW

(decisively)

There's not but one thing to do. Put the body in one of the canoes and take it down to Ainty and turn it over to the highway patrol. Tell them what happened.

ED glances at DREW uncertainly, and then looks back at LEWIS.

LEWIS

(gazing out over
the river)

Tell them what, exactly?

DREW

(becoming just a
little more passionate)

Just what happened! This is justifiable homicide if anything is! They were sexually assaulting two members of our party at gunpoint. Like you said, there was nothing else we could do.

LEWIS

Nothing but shoot him in the back with an arrow.

DREW

(not sure what is going
on in Lewis' mind, and
afraid of what might be)

It was your doing, Lewis.

LEWIS

(still looking out
onto the river)

What would you have done?

DREW

(hotly)

It doesn't make any difference what I would have done....

He breaks off as they react to a kind of terrible sigh, something like the sound the BEARDED MAN gave out when he finished with BOBBY. For a moment the city men look around, and then LEWIS stoops swiftly down to the BEARDED MAN. The BEARDED MAN sighs again, a long, sobbing sound, and then slumps completely.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.10)

ED

(timorously)

Is he dead?

LEWIS nods without looking up.

LEWIS

He is now. He's mighty dead. We
couldn't have saved him, though.
He's centre-shot.

LEWIS rises, and the city men stand still for a moment,
looking this way and that, all but LEWIS. LEWIS is gazing
out over the river again.

LEWIS

Let's just figure for a minute. Does
anybody know anything about the law?

DREW

I've been on jury duty exactly once.

ED

(resignedly)

That's once more than I have.

BOBBY, comes up, fiery-faced and violated and with that
vindictiveness that only the violated have. He shakes his
head, his eyes murderously narrow.

LEWIS

You don't have to know much law to
know that if we take this guy down
out of these mountains and turn him
over to the sheriff, we'd go on trial.
I don't know what the charge would be,
technically, but we'd be up against a
jury, sure as hell.

DREW

(convinced of
his innocence)

Well, so what?

LEWIS

(patiently)

All right, now. We've killed a man.
Shot him in the back. And we not only
killed a man, we killed a cracker, a
mountain man. Let's consider what
might happen.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.11)

DREW
(stalwartly)
All right. Consider it. We're
listening.

LEWIS relaxes for a moment and scratches his head. The others wait for him to speak.

LEWIS
I'm goddamned if I want to come
back up here for shooting this guy
in the back, with a jury made up
of his cousins and brothers and
maybe his father and mother, too,
for all I know.

No one says anything in answer. There are various gestures of helplessness and indecision. DREW stands very still, with his hands on his hips, getting his refutation together.

LEWIS
(suddenly to
Bobby)
What do you think, Bobby?

BOBBY's face is red, narrow-eyed, hate-filled. He does not reply or even seem to hear, but goes quite deliberately over to the corpse and stands looking down at it. Suddenly, without any warning at all, he kicks it as hard as he can in the face, and, before LEWIS can stop him, does it again.

LEWIS pulls BOBBY back from the corpse gently but firmly, and BOBBY walks away from the group and the corpse.

LEWIS
(turning to
his buddy, and
part-time pro-
tege, Ed)
How about you, Ed?

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.12)

ED

(making a
tremendous
effort to
come to a de-
cision, and
not being able
to)

God, I don't know. I really don't.

DREW has now got his argument together. He is frightened, but he is sure of the position he wants to take, and speaks with the decisiveness of a man who has to be right.

DREW

(pointing
deliberately
down at the
corpse)

I don't know what you have in mind, Lewis. But if you conceal this body you're setting yourself up for a murder charge. That much law I do know.

LEWIS looks at DREW with a genuinely interested expression on his face.

LEWIS

(with his
crazy, infectious
enthusiastic look)

Suppose there's no body? No body, no crime. Isn't that right?

DREW

(even more
desperately,
with utter
conviction)

What on God's earth are you thinking about, Lewis? This is not one of your fucking games. You killed somebody. There he is.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.13)

DREW points down again, and this time the three of them look down where he points, at the corpse.

LEWIS

I did kill him. But you're wrong when you say this is nothing like a game. It may be the most serious kind of game there is, but if you don't see it as a game, you're missing an important point.

ED

(having heard things like this from Lewis so many times before)
Come on, Lewis. For once let's not carry on this way.

LEWIS

(turning suddenly on Ed like an animal)
Ed, you listen. And listen good. We can get out of this, I think. Get out without any question asked, but if we connect up with the law, we'll be connected to this man, this body, for the rest of our lives. We've got to get rid of him.

ED

(excited with hope, but still doubtful)
How? Where?

LEWIS slowly and almost majestically raises his right hand and extends his arm fully, then sweeps it in an all-embracing gesture, over all the woods, all the trees, the whole wilderness.

LEWIS

(quietly and very impressively)
Everywhere!

The three faces watch him transfixed; DREW's very set; BOBBY's full of hate, weakness, and killing rage; ED's falling under the old spell.

LEWIS

Anywhere! Nowhere!

Despite themselves, they follow his eyeline into the dense tangled wood.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.14)

But DREW pulls back into himself and holds LEWIS's eye.

DREW

How do you know the other guy
hasn't gone for the police?

LEWIS

(shakes his head)

You think he's going to tell the
police what went on here?

DREW

Well, what if he's watching us,
right now. You look around Lewis,
he could be anywhere.

This registers powerfully on ED. He tries not to look round, but can't help himself. He cuts his eyes this way and that, almost superhumanly apprehensive and alert. Then his eyes come back to LEWIS, and they see LEWIS standing, relaxed, leaning on his bow, apparently not worried at all, in complete charge of the situation. On seeing him this way, ED looks deeply relieved. You would follow LEWIS anywhere, and now they realise that they are going to have to do just that.

DREW

We wouldn't be so hard to follow,
dragging a corpse.

LEWIS

(as you might placate
a child)

You leave that to me, Drew. I'll
make sure no one tracks us.

LEWIS looks off into the far distance, a look of tranquillity on his face.

LEWIS

In about a month or six weeks this
valley'll be flooded....hundreds of
feet under water... Did you ever
look out over a lake. Something
buried under it....under it....that's
as buried as it can get.

DREW feels himself sinking into the lake of LEWIS's imagination. He shakes his head vigorously.

DREW

I'm telling you, I don't want any
part of it.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.15)

LEWIS rises and faces DREW very deliberately. This is the showdown between them, and all four men know it.

LEWIS
(with all his enormous
male vitality and
physical power)
What do you mean, Drew? You are
part of it.

DREW
(staunchly)
It's a matter of the law.

LEWIS stands there relaxed. He gestures with his hand to indicate the wilderness they're in.

LEWIS
You see any law around here? We're
the law. So let's vote on it. I'll
go along with the vote. And so will
you, Drew. You've got no choice.

LEWIS turns to BOBBY, his hideously weak and hate-ridden,
violated face.

BOBBY
(in a thick, strangled
voice)
I say get rid of the son of a bitch.
Do you think I want this to get around?

LEWIS turns to ED as though playing his trump card, which
indeed he is.

LEWIS
Ed?

DREW suddenly steps over the corpse and confronts ED, putting
the flat of his hand in front of ED's face and shaking it
with violent emphasis. He has got to get ED to agree with
him and split the vote.

DREW
(with all the urgency
he has)
Think what you're doing, Ed, for God's
sake. You're not implicated in this
unless you go along with what Lewis
wants to do. Ed, don't. I'm begging
you. Don't.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.16)

There is silence. LEWIS waits, confidently, DREW is grim and adamant, BOBBY is full of hatred, and ED is coming to the all-important decision.

ED

(leaning out so as to
speak to Lewis around
Drew)

I'm with you.

The spell of debate and decision-making is over.

LEWIS gets down by the corpse again, all business this time.

LEWIS

All right then.

LEWIS drags the arrow-shaft out of the body slowly and laboriously, broadhead first. He wipes off the worst of the blood then, clips it into his bow-quiver, where it looks just like the others, except that it is red.

ED takes his knife out of the sapling, puts it in the scabbard and buckles on the belt with the knife and the rope.

LEWIS, with silent signals, positions each of the MEN to carry the CORPSE. They are very awkward about it, with ED and DREW carrying the shoulders and LEWIS and BOBBY the feet. They begin to carry the BODY feet-foremost into the woods, away from the river.

42. EXT. DENSE WOODS.

DAY

They flounder in the bushes, almost falling from time to time, BOBBY cursing, and so on.

LEWIS's face is calm and purposeful, and DREW keeps shaking his head as though he simply cannot believe in this folly.

As the undergrowth thickens, branches whip back suddenly and strike them in their faces. Nobody says anything to anybody else; the only things to be heard from the FOUR MEN are exclamations and an occasional startled curse.

With a sudden movement LEWIS shifts his part of the corpse to ED and doubles back the way they have come. He runs crouching like an animal darting in and out of the trees. He has drawn his knife.

The THREE MEN struggle on. ED grunting with his increased burden.

(CONTINUED)

42 (Cont.)

After a moment LEWIS appears at his side, taking his share of the weight again.

LEWIS

He's not following. But we'll make sure there's no tracks. This way.

LEWIS leads them to the left where a creek is revealed. They scramble into the muddy water and wade up it laboriously.

The forest here has a funereal, swampy look. The MEN toil along with the BODY. They are now absolutely covered and drenched with sweat, from the stifling, breathless quality of this part of the woods. They climb out of the creek and twist and turn among the trees, until there is a feeling of utter lostness.

43.

EXT. SWAMPY FOREST

DAY

Unexpectedly, LEWIS holds up a hand, and, following his example, the others aid him in letting the corpse down onto the ground.

LEWIS motions for ED, and ED steps up to him. In a kind of silent ceremony....very ritualistic....LEWIS unclips the death-arrow and hands it to ED, who takes it, not knowing exactly what LEWIS wants him to do with it. He examines it as he would any other arrow, then hands it back to LEWIS.

They are next to a blue-black seepage of water like a sump of some kind. As though he were competing in an archery tournament, LEWIS puts the arrow on the string of his bow and draws it.

In the act of drawing it he appears to aim up into the trees and ED's eyes follow the projection that the arrow might take. But very dramatically....LEWIS slowly brings it down until the arrow is pointing directly at the swampy ground. He holds the arrow at full draw for a long endless moment, mesmerising the others in the tension he creates. He is concentrating utterly. He releases.

The death-arrow disappears into earth. It is perfect. He is deep in what is almost a Zen-like concentration. There is no trace of the arrow. It might have gone a mile deep or even penetrated the very heart of the earth itself.

LEWIS breaks his own spell by bending down to pick up the corpse; the others follow his example. They struggle on with it for a while.

LEWIS turns, pointing down directly underfoot. The MEN put the body down.

44.

EXT. BURIAL PLACE

DAY

LEWIS falls to his knees and starts digging with his bare hands. The others come down to the ground with him and start digging too.

It is fairly easy work, and they do it gladly, even DREW, in a kind of a frenzy to get rid of the body. They dig like dogs, throwing dirt this way and that.

The self-absorbed efficiency of DREW, who is working harder and getting more done than any of them, is very striking. Their breathing is heavy and irregular in the ominous silence.

Finally, LEWIS stops digging. It is a very makeshift grave indeed, with ferns growing around it. The body lies there beside the digging men, serene and indifferent, and the gun beside it.

They stand up and regard their work. LEWIS solemnly nods his head. DREW crosses himself. Then they roll the corpse in a very undignified way into the grave. LEWIS reaches back and gets the gun. He puts it into the grave, looks at his "arrangement" for a moment, then reaches back into the trench and makes some final adjustments. He draws back, apparently satisfied.

LEWIS

(conclusively)

O.K.

The FOUR MEN shovel and scramble the dirt back into the grave. The body slowly being made to disappear under the four-part volley of dirt and leaves. At last he is totally covered, and LEWIS smooths the leaf-mold over him. They are all ludicrously kneeling before the grave.

DREW looks intently at ED, as though his gaze were willing ED to do something before it gets to be too late.

LEWIS

(with conviction)

Fern's'll be growing here in a few days. Nobody'd ever come on him in a million years. I doubt if even we could find this place again.

DREW

There's still time, Lewis. You better be sure you know what you're doing.

LEWIS gets to his feet, rubbing the dirt and leaf mold off his hands:

(CONTINUED)

44 (Cont.)

LEWIS
 (with all his old
 conviction)
 I'm sure. Believe me.

But ED cannot resist searching the trees anxiously.

45. EXT. THE RESTING PLACE

DAY

The FOUR MEN scramble into the two canoes and shove off. They hastily rearrange their gear as they move out into the current. They are desperate to be away. All except LEWIS who is relaxed and seems almost reluctant to leave the place where he killed THE MAN. He looks at it intently.

LEWIS
 It never happened. Think of it as
 a dream.

BOBBY
 Lewis. Let's get the fuck out of
 here.

ED
 What's the plan, Lewis?

LEWIS
 (soothingly)
 Plan? Why we just paddle on down
 to Aintree, pick up those cars and
 go home. What else?

The river is transformed for them, ominous and threatening, every dark opening in the trees a possible menace, every turn in the river a dangerous event. They jerk their heads from side to side; wild, hunted animal looks. ED and DREW are together again in the aluminium canoe while LEWIS and BOBBY are in the heavy wooden one. ED and DREW get a little ahead. ED brings his bow up close to him, ready.

While all this is going on they have been moving into a gorge. The rock-face rises and narrows in, the sound of the river changes, reverberating, intensifying.

ED tries to speak to DREW but cannot get through to him. The sound of the river as it comes back off the cliff-walls is now such that the human voice can hardly be heard at all, even when it shouts its loudest.

46. EXT. THE GORGE

DAY

ED glances to his left, and his gaze travels up the wall awsomey, higher and higher, until he sees that the gorge is at least a hundred and fifty feet high, or maybe even higher. ED looks apprehensively at this, all the time in the tremendous sound of the reverberating water.

The river is beginning to fall more abruptly. There are more rapids and more rocks. ED and DREW are working hard to keep the canoe going straight. They are covered with spray and foam, the canoe pitches and bucks.

They come into a comparatively calm stretch between rapids, and go around a turn. A long stretch of very rough water lies ahead, going out of sight around another curve. It looks awfully rough; too rough.

ED

(screaming at the top
of his lungs)

Let's go right down the middle. Give
me some speed, baby!

Something happens to DREW; it is impossible to tell what. He shakes his head violently (but this might just be the canoe bumping on a rock) and his paddle is whirled out of his hand by the river.

He pitches over, or is thrown over or something. Whatever it is, the canoe goes out of control. ED lets go of his paddle and grabs for the bow at his feet as his last act before the canoe overturns in the boiling, angry, murderous water.

47. EXT. THE GREAT RAPIDS

DAY

ED is part of the river, turning over and over, banging on stones, sometimes out of the water and sometimes under it, rushing along with unbelievable force.

Momentarily he surfaces facing back up river as LEWIS and BOBBY founder helplessly on the first canoe.

LEWIS and BOBBY spill out on opposite sides, and the two canoes roll over and over each other like logs, until the wooden canoe bursts open on a rock.

ED struggles desperately with the water, trying to get his feet forward of him. After several attempts, he succeeds. His body elongates in the river. He has the bow, and he begins to slither over moss-covered rocks on his back. He hits the back of his head on one big rock, but then seems to get the hang of it. There is a curious look of pained pleasure on his face as he slides along, still alive.

(CONTINUED)

47 (Cont.)

A deeper turmoil of water sucks him under, despite the life-jacket.

Then the last of the rapids are ahead, and ED goes over them, over a last big rock and down into calm water.

48. EXT. POOL AT BASE OF GORGE

DAY

ED floats, cradling the bow, in the slow water below the falls: he is a tiny figure, idly turning in the aftermath of the furious white water, down between the enormous wings of the gorge-sides.

He lies back in his life-jacket as though on a bed. He is groggily trying to assess his situation. He grimaces with pain, and lifts his left hand out of the water. He has hold of the arrows in the bow-quiver by the arrowheads themselves. He lets go, and his palm is washed with blood.

ED clumsily tries to rearrange himself in the water: trying to get into position to look upstream at the last of the rapids he has just come down, trying to look for the others. He keeps looking at the last rocks of the rapids, but can see no sign of life.

A man flops over the rocks of the white water, completely out of control, and he recognizes after a bit, that it is BOBBY.

BOBBY starts to splash his way to the side. Through no fault of his own, unhurt. Soon LEWIS is spewed out of the rapids, one hand holding his paddle and the other over his face.

LEWIS writhes and twists in the water. ED moves towards him.

LEWIS

(against the river-
sound)

My leg's broke. It feels like it
broke off.

ED

Hold on to me.

(CONTINUED)

48 (Cont.)

LEWIS gets hold of ED's life-jacket or collar, and ED struggles to get both of them to the bank. ED glances back from time to time, looking for DREW.

ED and LEWIS reach the bank, where BOBBY leans out to help them.

LEWIS crow-hops and gets himself onto a big rock, where he collapses. ED goes to him and tries to make him comfortable. LEWIS is still holding onto his face with a hand, his pain obviously all but intolerable. ED bends down to him, for it appears as though LEWIS is trying to say something.

LEWIS

(against the ever-
present river sound)

Drew was shot. I saw it. He's
dead.

ED is stunned. Even in this condition, LEWIS has the power to shake his equilibrium. The roar of the rapids is deafening. They have to shout to be heard above it.

ED

Was that it? Something happened.
But I don't know. Shit, Lewis,
what a mess you got us in to.

He gets up from LEWIS's side and turns uneasily to BOBBY.

ED

Let's try and find Drew.

He wades back into the water with that special revulsion that it takes to get back into cold water once you have left it. BOBBY follows him.

BOBBY

Shot?

ED

He says.

They swim about somewhat aimlessly for a moment or two, then something comes tumbling down the rapids. They both see it and it awakes hope in them.

(CONTINUED)

48 (Cont.1)

BOBBY
(calling out)

Drew!

It is not DREW but his guitar. The neck has snapped but it is still connected to the box by the strings.

DISSOLVE:

49. EXT. POOL AT BASE OF GORGE

NIGHT

They are still swimming, searching. A moon has risen.

ED

Drew! Drew!

The SOUND echoes against the walls of the gorge.

The aluminium canoe, half-buried in water is slowly circling in an eddy. They push it into shore and ED finds a broken paddle too. They continue their conversation in an atmosphere of strange unreality as they swim and then climb out of the water.

ED

I think he means to pick the rest of us off tomorrow.

BOBBY

What...?

ED

That's what I'd do. Wouldn't you?

They stand now, dripping wet, looking out at the water.

ED

If Lewis is right, and I think he is, that toothless bastard drew down on us while we were lining up to go through the rapids. He killed the first man in the first boat. Next would have been me. Then you.

BOBBY

In other words, it's lucky we spilled.

ED

Right. Lucky. Very lucky.

They stand together without saying anything for a moment.

BOBBY

What are we going to do?

(CONTINUED)

49 (Cont.)

ED
(points up)
What is he going to do?

ED turns and leans down towards LEWIS with sudden angry vehemence.

ED
Well, Lewis, what will he do, huh?

LEWIS makes no sign of having heard. He is locked in his pain. But on his contorted face could be an almost sphinxlike smile. ED turns back to BOBBY, recovering his control as quickly as he lost it.

BOBBY
(looking upward
apprehensively)
You think he's up there? Do you really?

ED
I'm thinking we better believe he's up there.

BOBBY
But then what?

ED
We're caught in this gorge. He can't come down here, but the only way out of this place for us is down the river. We can't run out of here at night, and when we move in the morning he'll be up there waiting.

BOBBY
(awed and terribly
frightened)
Jesus Christ Almighty.

ED turns to LEWIS again whose face is now turned into the earth, biting the dirt.

ED
(shouting)
Lewis! You got us into this. What do we do now? You're the guy with the answers.

LEWIS arches his back in some private spasm in the impenetrable world of his pain.

(CONTINUED)

49 (Cont.1)

ED

You're ruined, useless...broken.
You fucking fraud.

The invective brings LEWIS back to the surface of his agony.
He turns his head up and focusses his mad eyes on ED.

LEWIS

It's with you, Ed baby. This is
where you get to play the game.

BOBBY

He's delirious. What the fuck do
we do?

ED ponders for a moment.

ED

(with a kind of
secret certainty)

If he knows where we are, then we
know sure as hell where he'll be.
Right up there!

He stretches his arm upwards, but does not follow it with his
eyes. Very much the sort of gesture LEWIS would have made.

BOBBY

(hushed)

If he's up there and he wants to kill
us, he can kill us.

ED

Except we've got one big card.

BOBBY

We have?

ED

He thinks we can't get at him. And
if we can, we can kill him.

BOBBY

How?

ED

With a knife or a bow. Or with our
bare hands, if we have to.

BOBBY

We?

ED

No. One of us.

(CONTINUED)

49 (Cont.2)

BOBBY
(making a gesture of
pure helplessness)
I can't even shoot a bow.

ED
Then that makes it simple, doesn't it?

BOBBY
(reaching out a hand
and catching Ed's arm,
compulsively)
Ed, level with me. Do you really think
you can get up there in the dark?

ED makes no answer. He is utterly absorbed in the problem
now, totally concentrated.

They stand together in silence. ED with his hands on his hips,
looks up the gorge-side. LEWIS writhes on the ground under
them, and a muffled groan escapes him.

BOBBY
What are you going to do? I mean,
how will you find him?

ED
If I get up there, I'm going to do just
exactly what I would do if I was him.
There are some rapids right below here,
and he won't want to shoot at us when
we're jumping and bobbing up and down.
If he's coming, he'll come right here
where it's calm and he can take his
time about drawing a bead and setting
up his shots. There's got to be one
spot up there he'd go for. I'm going
to find it and wait for him.

BOBBY
I won't do it. You're setting me up
as a decoy.

ED
Listen, you son-of-a-bitch. You go up
there and kill him.

BOBBY is shaking, consumed with fear.

BOBBY
Couldn't we just.....

ED
...just what?

(CONTINUED)

49 (Cont.3)

BOBBY

(looks down,
shakes his head)

It's just that I don't want to die,
I really don't.

ED walks over and gets the bow, and strings it. He takes out one of the two arrows, tests it for straightness, then does the same with the other.

ED

I've got one good arrow and another
one that's crooked as a pretzel.
But I won't get but one shot anyway.

BOBBY stands without saying anything, and ED crouches down beside LEWIS, who is grinding the back of his head into the sand, in pain.

LEWIS

(looking straight
into Ed's face)

Do you know what the fuck you're doing?

ED

No, Creature. I'm going to make it up
as I go along.

LEWIS

(with terrifying intensity)

Kill him.

ED

(nodding gravely)

I'll kill him if I can find him.

LEWIS

(lying back once more)

Well, here we are, at the heart of the
Lewis Medlock country.

ED

(rising)

Pure survival.

LEWIS

This is what it comes to. I told you.

ED

(getting ready
to set out)

Yes. You told me.

50. EXT. CLIFF FACE

NIGHT

ED coils the nylon rope and puts his left arm between the bowstring and the bow, with the arrowheads turned down. He looks up the cliff one last time, then runs hard at it, scrambles, pulls up, and works himself up onto a little ledge about twelve or fifteen feet above the river. He turns around and stands there, looking out over the water.

The moon has risen over the river. The last of the rapids they have come down are on the right; on the left are the rapids further downstream; ED watches the river for a moment, mesmerised by its mystery.

He turns back to the cliff, tries some hand and foot positions, and begins to inch up. ED'S hands grope, finding holds, his feet doing the same. He begins to sweat and his breathing gets harsher. The cliff is getting steeper as it gets higher. He is beginning to labor and strain for every inch, and his breathing begins to sound more and more desperate.

He climbs up a kind of funnel where water trickles down from a spring. He climbs by bracing himself in this 'chimney'. The water runs over him. He pauses for a moment and smiles at a lone flower growing out of the rock.

Now he reaches an absolute impasse: he can't go up any farther and he can't go down. He can't go to the right or to the left. He is trapped, terrified and helpless. There is absolutely nothing he can do. He looks down, over his shoulder. There is the bright moon-pit, and it must be a hundred and fifty feet below him. He turns back to the cliff, leaning his face against it, sobbing, all control just about gone.

Suddenly he makes a lunge at the cliff....up the cliff....his hand catches on something. He gets hold of something with the other hand, and there is a wild hope in his face: the last hope of all.

Ed pulls up, and gets himself into a kind of narrow crevice or niche in the cliff. In doing this he almost loses the bow, but manages just barely to save it. He stretches out on the floor of the niche, breathing heavily, and trembling. It is as though he were lying in a coffin, except that he is sweating so heavily.

After a while he props up on one elbow and looks over the side of the crevice, down at the river. He lies there stroking the curves of the bow, looking down at the wild, Godlike and mindless beauty of the river on fire with moonlight.

ED

(mumbling profoundly)

What a view. What a view.

(CONTINUED)

50 (Cont.)

He lies watching the river intently.

ED has leaned out to see the view better and almost falls. The bow slithers over the side and he just manages to save it. He jerks back. Slowly he feels the crevice above his head, and around the top of it, to see what's there. Painfully he begins to get himself together once more: to climb.

He gets a hold....a fairly good hold....on something and drags himself upward out of the crevice. He climbs in a kind of trance, his fingers like independent beings crawl over the surface hauling the body after them.

He is so high over the river that the scene is both awesome and ridiculous. He is still inching up, and up, and up.

The cliff is not as steep as it was: things are going better. ED begins to crawl on his knees. He slithers and wriggles upward, and the sound of his breath is like that of a man who sees that he might after all be able to do what he's trying to do: might be able to do it, and probably will. There is a kind of rage of incredible belief and joy in ED's breathing: it is almost bestial.

He looks up, and the enormously intense moon is right in his face, coming down through a crack in the rock. He makes for the crack, gets into it, rises from his knees, stumbles forward among rocks and bushes, sobbing with relief.

He looks down at his feet, amazed to discover he can walk.

51. EXT. CLIFF TOP

NIGHT

He stands on the top of the cliff looking down at the enormous mindless blazing of the moonlit river. He has made it, and his attitude as he stands there is not completely mortal or even human. It is more godlike, or demonic. But it is not quite the face he's had before at all.

ED examines the cliff top very carefully. He comes to a big boulder with an open space that gives a perfect view of the river below.

ED nods: he figures that this might indeed be the place. He moves around experimenting with positions. The ground is soft and he leaves heavy tracks.

ED gets down at the very edge of the cliff in the prone position for firing a rifle. He sights an imaginary rifle down on the river. He looks around. The woods are very thick just back off the little open space he's in. He goes back into them, and ED selects a tree and climbs it with much labored movement and a few slips.

52. EXT. TREEHIDE

NIGHT

He opens the pine branches slowly with one hand, and looks out on little open space, which is below him and about fifteen yards away.

He breaks one or two branches to make the view permanent. He adjusts his feet and body then puts an arrow on the bow, gets himself set, and comes back to full draw. He does this two or three times until he's satisfied. He then hangs the bow on the limb and tries to get comfortable in the tree to wait for the first light. He stares fixedly, without expression into the 'tunnel' he will shoot down.

53. EXT. CLIFF TOP

NIGHT TO DAY

The trees, river and cliff top, strong dark shapes in the brilliant moonlight, now melt slowly into a flat grey dawn.

54. EXT. TREEHIDE

DAY

He is dozing, in the tree, his head back against the bole. The bow hangs beside his head, and a little light glints on the two arrowheads.

Suddenly ED starts, almost falls, catches himself and looks around with exhausted eyes. But he is awake enough to know that the sun is just beginning to appear. He shakes his head like a boxer trying to shake off a punch.

ED peers this way and that, trying to see a little more. He blinks his eyes like a man who has not had anywhere nearly enough sleep. He looks down into the sandy shelf. There is a pair of feet - boots...standing on the shelf, barely inside ED's range of vision.

ED's face is pure terror. He keeps looking, and the feet on the ground move until most of the whole man passes through ED's line of sight and then out of it to the other, upriver, side. But he has seen enough to know that the MAN is carrying a rifle.

ED cranes to see the MAN, but can't make him out again. Then the feet appear on the other side of the tunnel of branches, stop for a moment, then come right to the center of it and stop. What ED can see of the MAN indicates that he is looking at the ground, examining it, maybe. ED's tracks, of course, are what he's looking at. Hardly daring to move, ED stretches out for his bow, hanging on a branch. It creaks as he takes hold of it. ED winces at the sounds he is making. His hands tremble uncontrollably as he takes an arrow and strings it. Inch by inch he levels the bow, then slowly pulls back the string.

(CONTINUED)

54 (Cont.)

The vertical rectangle of the peep sight on the string wavers back...just as it did when ED hunted the deer. He holds at full draw, fighting to control the trembling that racks his whole body.

He adjusts the peep sight up and down, right and left, until little by little, in the wavering peep sight, the MAN is framed.

Then with a shock, ED notices what THE MAN is doing: he is getting the gun ready, and his eyes are following ED's tracks straight to the tree. They reach the tree, and slowly begin to rise from the ground. In a moment he is going to be looking up through the tunnel into ED's face.

With a kind of strangled cry ED releases. The peep-sight snaps away. Then all hell breaks loose.

The whole tree shakes violently, as though a giant ax had struck it and at the same time there is a tremendous explosion, as the gun goes off in what had been utter silent concentration. Then ED is falling through the tree, branches slapping at him, turning, whirling about him. He cries out then crashes to the ground with tremendous impact.

He is on the ground without his bow, not knowing quite what has happened, shaken, terrified. He tries to move. He cries out in pain, startingly, and as though he is discovering that he has broken a leg, a rib, or something else. He raises his head, cautiously.

He sees THE MAN with the gun staggering towards him. THE MAN fires the gun at the tree, up into the branches. Then he stops, swaying a little and looks right into ED's face. He raises the gun to shoot again but fires into the ground just in front of his feet. At the same moment, ED ducks down, terrified. He crawls a few feet and after a moment carefully raises his head again.

THE MAN is on his knees. He is turned sideways revealing for the first time the arrow, almost its whole length, coming out the back of his throat. It waggles horribly behind him. He is retching and the violence of his retching shakes the arrow loose, and it falls from him.

ED watches with horrified fascination.

ED.

Die! My God! Die, die!

ED puts his head back down and is still, apparently unconscious. Then he slowly raises himself to do something, but this time it is not to look at the dying man, but at himself.

He looks down at his side and it has an arrow sticking through it. Still attached to the arrow by the lower part of the bow-quiver, is the broken bow.

(CONTINUED)

54 (Cont.1)

ED puts his head down once more, trying to organize himself, to find what to do. Finally, he pulls himself to a sitting position and cautiously, with great, obvious pain, tries to pull the arrow out of his side.

He can't, and he sees he can't. With great effort he pulls the big knife out of the scabbard...and cuts away the material from the flying suit he's wearing from around the arrow. He tries in a gingerly way to cut the arrow out. Then he seizes the knife in both hands and drives it down. He explodes in a scream.... something like BOBBY's in the rape scene....and the knife falls ringing on stone.

Once more he reaches down to his side, and this time, in some way, he comes away with the arrow. He sits for a moment with the bloody shaft in his hands, like a religious object, just looking at it, and it is bloody indeed.

Now he looks over the rock again onto the sandy shelf. THE MAN has gone.

ED gets to his feet, painfully, protecting his hurt side. He picks up the bloody knife, and, with a great deal of awkwardness and effort, cuts a sleeve off his outfit and a long strip from one leg, and puts the sleeve over the wound as a bandage and binds it with the strip of nylon from the leg. He is a weird-looking figure when this has been done. He hugs his side with a crooked arm and leans into the wound as he walks.

He moves out onto the sandy shelf. He goes to the place where THE MAN was, and stands looking down, swaying and thinking.

ED gets down on one knee, wincing with pain, and runs his hand over the rocks and sand. He picks up a handful of sand with blood in it and rifles through it like a placer-miner examining gold-dust.

Still on his knees he follows the blood trail of the hurt MAN. He looks for it and finds it: on stones, on pine needles, on blades of grass.

(CONTINUED)

54 (Cont.2)

ED follows the blood, rock by rock: following the blood spoor like a dog would.

He moves on, stone by stone, leaf by leaf, irregularly stopping sometimes to search, then finding the blood again and going on.

His head low down, he is startled to suddenly come upon the rifle.

It is long and flat and old. Oddly, it is a repeating rifle rather than a shuck-action. ED touches it.

He goes on, past the gun, and into a canopy of leaves. Here, it is harder to find the blood. He looks at bushes, at the leaves on bushes individually, at pinestraw, at small pebbles. Back and forth. Finally he finds one drop, and this one drop draws him further on, deeper in.

55. EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS

DAY

ED gets to his feet with a weird corckscrew movement. He is in a clearing.

He stands there swaying, not knowing what to do, looking about.

ED starts around the perimeter of the clearing. He is still staggering, but learning to hold himself together a little better, learning to cope with what he has to cope with.

The sun is slanting and shuddering on the ground around him, and the wind is sighing in the branches overhead. He goes along through this modified cathedral atmosphere, looking for more blood, holding his side together, holding his own blood in.

He stops, peering.

There is a dead tree about twenty yards away, and something lying at the foot of it. ED moves to this, and then looks down onto the BODY OF A MAN. It has hold of one root of the tree.

ED turns him over with a foot. He has a hand on his knife. He pulls the knife slowly and purposefully out of the case, and bends down. He looks at the CORPSE's face.

A scream comes from him: a terrible scream of frustration and horror.

ED

Oh no! Oh NO!

(CONTINUED)

55 (Cont.)

The MAN's mouth is full of yellow teeth.

Shaken and fascinated, ED gets down on one knee with the knife in his hand. Shuddering, he holds the MAN's head and pries at his upper gum with the knife, and an upper plate begins to slide from it. As soon as this is established, ED turns the knife and drives the false teeth back into the mouth.

ED takes the knife into his hand again. A low growl comes from him. This is a moment balanced between infinite possibilities: ED could do anything at this point. He has the face of a primitive man. His features are transformed by extreme effort and lack of sleep. He looks savage.

ED's breath again, harsh and loud. Into the breath comes some kind of crazy melody, maybe something of the Beatles: something identifiable. There is also some suggestion of an advertising jingle: one of these inescapable tunes from our daily life.

ED

King Size Coke has more for you...

King Size Coke has more for you...

ED's eyes are truly maniacal as he continues to sing and hum crazily.

Shaken by his own incipient violence, ED fumbles the knife back into the case. He takes hold of THE MAN and tries to get him up on his shoulders in the old fireman's carry from Boy Scout days. Finally he gets up with THE MAN: and starts back through the cathedral woods, with the wind blowing lightly through the trees and the sunspots dancing on the ground. The weather is pleasant and bright: early morning spring.

ED staggers through the bushes with THE MAN on his back. He is barely making it, but he is making it. They tear through small boughs of rhododendrons. Finally they break through the last screen of the woods and move slowly back into the clearing. ED puts the MAN down at almost the exact spot where he shot him, collapsing with him. They both lie perfectly still side by side, indistinguishable, one creature.

56.

EXT. CLIFF TOP

DAY

ED takes the rifle by the barrel, swinging it twice around his head like a hammer-thrower, and slings it out over the river. It falls away, spinning. It hits the water.

Now ED throws the death-arrow and the other one into the river like spears. He picks up the broken bow, and he turns it over in his hands. There is the greatest affection in his

(CONTINUED)

56 (Cont.)

face: This is the thing that saved all their lives, but mainly his own life.

Then the spell breaks, and ED steps deliberately to the cliff top and pitches the bow over the side. It falls away.

ED steps back beside the dead MAN and takes stock. He begins to uncoil the rope, and it is evident that he has quite a lot of it.

ED ties the rope under the arms of the dead MAN and walks over and ties the other end to a tree growing at almost the very edge of the cliff.

He goes back to THE BODY and hauls it to the edge of the cliff, takes up the slack in the rope with his hands, and kicks and shoves the body over the cliff with his feet.

ED braces back and strains to let THE BODY down, arm over arm.

It goes hard. ED sweats and strains, tries to take a turn of rope around his body, finds he can't do it, lets the BODY down foot by foot. He backs up and braces himself against the tree, working harder than he's ever worked in his life.

The coil of rope wears slowly... very slowly away at ED's feet.

Finally, at long last, all the rope is gone, and ED steps away from the tree, trying to get his hands unclenched. He wrings his hands up and down like someone who's touched a hot stove, trying to get the circulation back into them.

He goes to the edge and looks down, then gets down on his knees at the cliffside and takes hold of the rope with both hands.

He gets his feet over the edge and starts down on the rope, letting himself down hand over hand, straining and hurting, but going down well enough. He scrambles against the cliff-face with his feet, finding footholds.

BOBBY, hearing something, wades out into the river to look up at ED and THE CORPSE swinging on the rope. It is evident that ED is almost completely exhausted. He goes down toward where the CORPSE dangles below. He is almost there.

ED stops to rest on a little ledge. THE CORPSE is about ten or fifteen feet under him, swinging moodily in the breeze from the river, spinning idly, knocking against the cliff face.

(CONTINUED)

56 (Cont.1)

ED sits, holding the rope. He is still about fifty feet up from the river, and he is evidently figuring what to do. From where he sits he can see even LEWIS lying in the bottom of the canoe. LEWIS's position is terribly twisted looking and unnatural. He has his hand over his face. BOBBY stands watching.

On the ledge, ED looks at his free hand, flexing the fingers. He slides off the ledge and starts down again.

ED is almost on top of THE CORPSE. He hangs there for a moment, looking down, trying to figure what to do.

Suddenly it is as though the film had broken, but what has really happened is that the rope has broken. There is an instant of pure blackness, then the sky and the river and the gorge turn haphazardly and idly about each other. There is a muffled yell. The yell is suddenly cut off, and ED is in another world.

It is green and quiet, underwater. ED finds himself intertwined with the CORPSE whose limbs move under the water with uncanny animation. It is as though the man were trying to embrace ED or drown him. He fights free. Cocked to one side of the pervading green is a suffused yellow area, and gradually ED approaches this. As he gets closer to it, he sees that it is something like a submerged sun, wavering and expanding. In fact, it is the sun, and it explodes in his face as ED's head comes clear of the water.

57. EXT. BELOW THE RAPIDS

DAY

ED struggles feebly in the water, trying to discover if he's been hurt even more, trying to move his arms and legs and discovering that he can do it. He begins, with infinite weariness and effort, to swim to the canoe.

ED reaches the battered side of the canoe, standing up in the shallow water among the rocks, and looking over the gunwale into the bottom of the canoe.

BOBBY has reached out to help him in.

LEWIS is lying there, either dead or barely alive. The floor of the canoe is awash with filthy water, much of it containing stuff that LEWIS has vomited up. This is floating and softly sloshing around LEWIS's form.

BOBBY

I don't believe it. This is not happening to us.

BOBBY looks searchingly at ED, but ED just shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

57 (Cont.)

BOBBY

And you killed him? You killed him?

Again ED says nothing but goes over to look at LEWIS. There is no sign of life. He bends down to listen for his breathing.

BOBBY

Lewis has been having a bad time.
Once I thought he'd died. He's
awful bad hurt.

He gets up and they walk over to where the DEAD MAN lies on the rocks, face down, with the rope piled on and off him.

BOBBY

(looking up with
incredulity)

Is this.....?

ED

(not absolutely sure,
but fairly sure)

Yes. I think so. It's got to be.
He had a gun.

BOBBY

But it might have been just a guy
out....

ED

He was in the right place at the
right time. No; it's got to be him.

BOBBY suddenly catches a glimpse of ED's injury.

BOBBY

(with genuine concern)

But he shot you, didn't he?

ED shakes his head.

ED

(resignedly)

I fell out of the tree onto my other
arrow.

58. EXT. THE RIVER

DAY

They are in the canoe, all four. ED is in the stern seat, BOBBY in the bows. ED has the whole paddle, BOBBY the broken one. LEWIS and the DEAD MAN lie side by side, and it

(CONTINUED)

58 (Cont.)

is hard to tell which is dead, and which is not, for they both might be. THE CORPSE has a number of rocks tied to him with cut up lengths of ED's rope.

They are moving from the bank out to the middle of the large pool under the rapids.

They ship their paddles and heave out the rocks. The procedure is grotesque and terrifying, and also in a greusome way funny, for THE CORPSE does not seem to want to leave the canoe. It hangs spreadeagled on the gunwale. In a wild, desperate and abandoned movement, ED picks up the last and biggest rock, the one tied around the BODY's neck, and with great effort, heaves it out. THE CORPSE is whisked with breathtaking quickness away and into the river. The canoe rocks wildly.

ED and BOBBY now begin to paddle, very slowly, in a grotesque parody of canoeing.

The canoe moves away, down river. Neither look back.

The canoes turns out of the gorge and into the eye of the sun and it seems to float upon pure liquid gold, pure light; and in the middle of this, the TWO exhausted MEN.

The sun burns higher. Dreamlike, the trees drift past them. LEWIS lies with an arm over his face. The canoe glides on through the black water.

59. EXT. DREW'S ROCK

DAY

They come around another turn, and there is a momentary but definite impression of a man, a body, facing the canoe from some of the river-rocks downstream.

BOBBY
(turning, in unbelief
and horror)

Ed!

ED
(quietly)
Is it Drew?

BOBBY
(sobbing)
Yes. Yes.

ED
Let's go to him.

(CONTINUED)

59 (Cont.)

DREW is sitting in a grotesque position in the rocks, as though in a kind of natural chair, the water flowing over him, propping his head back, a thin continuous spray of it going into his open mouth. He has his eyes wide open, gazing upstream as if forever.

The canoe rides just past THE BODY and stops.

With infinite weariness, ED gets out of the canoe onto the rocks and the shallows around them. He walks the length of the canoe, and comes to BOBBY, who is sitting, holding his half-paddle, asleep.

He jabs at BOBBY who wakes up and gets slowly out of the canoe.

DREW sits there, uncaring, a stupid, water-caused, streaming grin on his face. He even looks happy, in a kind of weird, eternal way.

ED tries to pull the BODY out of the rocks, and at first can't do it. Then he gets THE BODY by the straps of its life-jacket and hauls it forward. The effort makes ED trip, he flounders and falls into the river, and THE CORPSE, freed, begins to float serenely away.

ED flounders after THE CORPSE, gets it over to one of the rocks and beaches it.

He turns THE CORPSE over, looking at it intently.

ED

(beckoning to Bobby
without looking in his
direction)

Bobby, come here, There's something
we've got to decide about.

BOBBY reaches ED, and ED points down at something concerning THE CORPSE.

They hang on the rock, panting and gasping.

ED

Is this a gunshot wound?

BOBBY

Ed, you know I wouldn't know. But
it sure doesn't look like it to me.

ED

(evidently touching some-
thing on the corpse)
What about this place, though?
Something hit him in the head. But
whether this place killed him or not
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

59 (Cont.1)

BOBBY

Or whether it was made by a rock
after he went in.

ED

I'd like to know. I think we ought
to know.

BOBBY.

How can we know?

ED

Lewis would know. Let's give him
a look.

They drag DREW's body to the gunwale of the canoe. They
put DREW's head up over the gunwale so that LEWIS can have
a close look at the back and side of it.

ED sinks down until his head is exactly on the same level
as DREW's.

ED

(softly)

Lewis.

LEWIS is either dead or sleeping or passed out.

ED

(softly but urgently)

Lewis, give us just a second. It's
important. It's very important.

LEWIS raises his head and opens his eyes.

ED holds DREW's head in a gentle grasp, turning it slightly
and with the other hand pointing to the place he wants
LEWIS to look at.

ED.

Lewis, was he shot? Did a bullet
make this?

A flicker of the old enthusiasm crosses LEWIS's eyes and
face. He looks maniacal and wise. He knows something the
others don't. Or does he?

ED

(more urgently)

Well, was he shot? Was he, Lewis?

(CONTINUED)

59 (Cont.2)

Slowly LEWIS brings his eyes from DREW's head to ED's eyes, and stares into them. They stare at each other.

Slowly and almost imperceptibly LEWIS nods his head.

LEWIS

(softly, but with utter conviction)

Grazed.

LEWIS sinks back into the bottom of the canoe.

BOBBY

Maybe.

ED

Maybe, is it. It'll have to be

(then, with resolution)

But we can't have anybody examining him. Maybe we can't tell but there are guys who can, and if we have to explain a man with a gunshot wound the whole thing'll come out.

BOBBY

(despairingly)

Are we going to get out of this? I don't see how we can. I really don't.

ED

(musing)

We're almost out of it now.

BOBBY

What are we going to do with Drew?

ED

We're going to sink him in this river. Forever.

BOBBY

O God. O God Almighty.

(CONTINUED)

59 (Cont.3)

ED

Listen, we can't explain somebody
killed with a rifle.

BOBBY

If he was.

ED

That's right: if he was.

BOBBY

(looking down into
the river)

There's no end to it.

(shaking his head)

No end.

ED bends and fumbles in his leg pocket for the extra bowstring he's brought along, and brings it out. It contains a built-in peep sight such as the one on the string he used to kill the man with, except this sight is blue rather than orange.

ED ties the string around a big rock and the other end around DREW's belt. He puts the rock in the canoe, and BOBBY gets back in. ED begins to float DREW's body downriver in its kapok life jacket, going along beside the body in his own life jacket, swimming slowly.

DREW floats face-up, his hands spread wide in the water. ED is very close to him, and he looks at one of DREW's hands.

It has a college class ring on it, and guitar calluses on the tips of the fingers, now puckered with the water. ED feels these with his own hand.

ED seems to cry or choke on the river water.

ED

You were the best of us, Drew.

ED undoes DREW's life jacket, and throws it into the canoe. He nods to BOBBY.

(CONTINUED)

59 (Cont.4)

BOBBY, on his knees beside LEWIS, heaves out the rock.

THE BODY is snatched under.

60. EXT. THE RIVER HILLY COUNTRY DAY

They are out of the gorge, back to the gentle wooded slopes. ED is paddling at long intervals, just keeping the canoe on a course. BOBBY is slumped in his seat, completely out of it. LEWIS is utterly still.

They come around another turn, and the river begins to speed up, but is not particularly dangerous-looking. And yet the sound goes up and up, becoming something close to a roar. It draws them out of their torpor. They sit up listening.

ED

(Afraid to believe
what he's hearing)

Bobby, I think I hear rapids. I know
I do.

61. EXT. FINAL RAPIDS DAY

The canoe begins to move faster, then faster and faster. What is out of sight around the next turn is making the sound. They start to paddle finding energy in the new danger.

ED

God. God, do something for us.

They go into the turn, and the water is getting vicious. ED and BOBBY work with the stream, doing what they can.

The sound is now tremendous. Spray is flying around the canoe.

Coming off the turn, there are rapids as far as the eye can see, seething, raging, tumultuous with the very power of the universe itself.

BOBBY simply flings his half-paddle away and gets ready to die, his hands over his face.

ED

(to Bobby)

Get down! Get down!

BOBBY drops back off his seat, holding onto the gunwales with both hands, riding right into the teeth of the white water.

(CONTINUED)

61 (Cont.)

The canoe careers through a mist of spray which foams up around it seeming to carry it into another element altogether. Down, down they go as though they will slip off the side of the world.

ED fights to keep the craft straight, the paddle almost torn from his hand by the unbridled violence of the water.

LEWIS screams soundlessly as the canoe bucks and scrapes over rocks.

ED has a look of profound exultation on his face, of wonderful, dreadful enjoyment.

ED

(shouts)

Hold on, boys! We're going home!

It becomes evident that this whole set of rapids culminates in a fall-off of about six feet. In other words, if they can get through this, they're out of danger, at least from this particular set of rapids.

They ride up to the fall-off, looking at it with horrified fascination. They go up, and the canoe is flying - it has leapt out of the river.

It comes down with terrific impact. It almost capsizes, but doesn't. And there it is.

62. EXT. FLAT COUNTRY

DAY

The canoe idles into the calm water past the falls. It is sloshing with water, and LEWIS is practically submerged.

BOBBY, still fallen back from his seat, tries to turn and say something, but he doesn't. ED pants and heaves for his breath. He looks down at his side and clenches it with his arm.

Finally, ED, getting things together in his head, speaks.

ED

Right here is where it all happened.

BOBBY turns around - as much as he can - and stares as though a savage or a madman had spoken. He has no notion of what ED means.

(CONTINUED)

62 (Cont.)

ED

Look. Somebody is going to ask us things. We'd better get our story straight. When you get asked, tell 'em that right here is where Drew fell out and Lewis broke his leg. This is where we lost the other canoe. O.K.?

BOBBY

(mumbling)

O.K.

Ed bends forward towards LEWIS.

ED

Lewis. Lewis. Do you hear me, buddy?

LEWIS makes no movement, but lies as still as ever. His face is badly sunburned, his lips cracked. It is something of a shock when he speaks.

LEWIS

(calmly and clearly)

I hear you. You've got it figured. We can get out of this. You're doing it exactly right; better than I could do.

ED is disturbed by LEWIS's stillness. It is as though he has passed across some threshold to the calm edge of death.

ED

Can you hold out a little longer?

LEWIS

Sure.

ED

There can't be too far to go now.

BOBBY

Ed! Look here!

ED looks up from LEWIS at the river bank where BOBBY is pointing. It is a cow: a plain black and white Friesian cow. Peacefully it crops the grass at the river's edge. BOBBY is grinning; ED's mouth falls open. It is salvation, deliverance indeed.

ED

It's a farm! We're here! We made it!

(CONTINUED)

62 (Cont.1)

BOBBY turns and smiles as he hasn't done before, and holds up the Churchill V-for-Victory sign. He is very likeable. He, too, is a new man.

ED

We did it.

BOBBY

You mean you did it.

ED

(proudly, but
with conviction)

No.

(pause)

We did it.

There is that special bond between them that comes from having been through hell together.

The land is domesticated, pastoral, pleasant.

63. EXT. BRIDGE AT AINTRY

DAY

ED and BOBBY are besching the canoe on a bank of shingle close to a concrete bridge that carries a road over the river. BOBBY sinks down next to the canoe, resting a hand on it, 'minding it.'

ED

I'm going to get help, Lewis. You'll
be out of there in no time.

ED turns and painfully limps up the slope to the road.

64. EXT. ROAD AND BRIDGE

DAY

Reaching the road, ED looks up and down it. The road is straight and empty and shimmering with heat. Through the haze, some two hundred yards away, is a gas station. He starts towards it. He is totally exhausted. He fixes his eyes on the gas station, concentrating absolutely on the problem of dragging his body to it.

An open truck goes past piled high with the furniture and belongings of a poor family. TWO CHILDREN sit on a sofa at the back and watch this curious, ragged man, holding his side, walking so slowly.

65. EXT. THE GAS STATION

DAY

A shiftless-looking COUNTRY BOY sits in a kitchen chair outside the station, propped against the wall. He watches ED coming with widening eyes, trying to calculate whether this man is drunk or sick or mad or what.

Sitting there at the side of the garage are the two cars, DREW's and LEWIS's.

ED looks at them in astonishment. He shakes his head and blinks, as though trying to shake off an hallucination.

He stumbles up to them and slaps LEWIS's car, proving its reality. Then he leans against it and laughs softly.

THE BOY gets up and calls over to him.

BOY

You came for the cars, mister?

ED

(looking up)

No.... Yes ... Not exactly.

THE BOY stands there hopelessly confused.

ED

Is there a phone here?

BOY

A phone?

ED

A telephone.

66. INT. THE GAS STATION

ED sits in a chair next to the phone among the pocket combs for sale and cheap dark glasses. His head is slumped back asleep, past caring. THE BOY watches him silently, not moving.

A hand touches him gently on the shoulder. ED starts and cries out. It is a BLACK AMBULANCE DRIVER in a white coat bending over him.

(CONTINUED)

66 (Cont.)

DRIVER
 (and in his voice
 is the quiet marvellous
 reassurance that Ed
 needs more than he
 needs anything else
 in the world)

What in the world happened to you, man?
 What in this world?

He helps ED to his feet. Through the window is the ambulance
 drawn up by the pumps. ED shakes his head.

ED
 Not me. There's another guy. He's
 hurt bad.

67. EXT. BRIDGE AT AINTRY

DAY

The AMBULANCE DRIVER and HIS ASSISTANT gently lift LEWIS
 out of the canoe. LEWIS groans or cries every time he is
 moved. They take him over to the ambulance, BOBBY following
 them making a token effort to help. ED leans heavily
 against the ambulance.

With LEWIS inside the DRIVER helps ED in too. At this point
 a Highway Patrol car drives up and stops, its antenna
 swishing. TWO OFFICERS get out, one of them a mean-looking
 blonde boy.

BLONDE-OFFICER
 What's going on here?

ED catches BOBBY's eye through the open rear door of the
 ambulance. They exchange a look which says "This is it" and
 "here goes." BOBBY meets THE OFFICER as he gets out of
 the car.

BOBBY
 We've had a bad accident. One
 of our party drowned.

OFFICER
 (suspiciously)
Drowned?

BOBBY
 Yes.

OFFICER
 How do you know he drowned?

(CONTINUED)

67 (Cont.)

AMBULANCE DRIVER

I got to get these men to the hospital,
officer.

He closes the door on ED and LEWIS and BOBBY's answer to THE OFFICER is cut off. ED watches through the window as BOBBY soundlessly explains to the PATROLMAN. The ambulance pulls away as BOBBY leads the OFFICER over to inspect the canoe.

68. INT. HOSPITAL

DAY

ED is lying on the examining table of the emergency room. His flying suit is in a heap on the floor. He wears only his shorts, his filthy tennis shoes and his improvised bandage.

The tight lines in ED's face are beginning to relax. He has an expression of perfect contentment. He is luxuriating in the safety and security of organised civilisation as represented by the hospital. He looks around at the ordinary medical paraphernalia.

ED

It's beautiful. Beautiful.

A DOCTOR has been scrubbing his hands in a basin. He turns now, wiping them dry.

DOCTOR

What is?

ED

Oh, chromium, paper tissues, a tap
full of hot water, everything.

Using something from a bottle, THE DOCTOR gets off ED's bandage.

DOCTOR

Good Lord, fellow! What's been
chopping on you? Somebody hit you
with an axe?

ED

Did it myself with an arrow.

DOCTOR

How in hell did you manage to shoot
yourself with an arrow? I didn't
think it could be done.

69. EXT. BIDDIFORD'S HOTEL

EVENING

The ambulance is drawn up outside a large, ramshackle old house with a sign over it saying 'Biddiford's Hotel.'

THE DRIVER is helping ED out of the front seat. He is back in the ragged flying suit. Through a tear in the side, the brilliant white of fresh bandages shows.

DRIVER

Take it easy, now.

ED

I will. I will.

A brisk, aproned WOMAN of 60 opens the screen door on the sagging porch before he gets up the steps.

WOMAN

Come on in. You're expected.

70. INT. BIDDIFORD'S

EVENING

BOBBY is hovering behind the WOMAN chewing a mouthful of food. Beyond him is a dining room table round which sit TWELVE OR FOURTEEN PEOPLE.

They are all looking though at ED who stands in the lobby looking rather limp.

WOMAN

You better eat just how you are.
I'll bet you can use a hot meal.

She leads him in and seats him. BOBBY goes back to his place. The OTHER GUESTS have still not resumed eating or talking. They look at him with some awe.

THE WOMAN piles up his plate and he puts a morsel to his mouth. It is like a sign. There is a rush of talk and clatter and laughter.

They all eat again and everybody wants to pass ED something, to do something for him. It is too much for him. He begins to cry - for Drew, for his own pain, but mostly in gratitude for being welcomed back to the human race.

ED catches BOBBY's eye across the table and they exchange a look which is like a thanksgiving.

Then ED wipes his eyes on his sleeve and starts to eat in earnest.

71. INT. BEDROOM BIDDIFORD'S

DAY

ED is lying in brilliant sunlight on a big country bed. He has part of a sheet over him. He wakes up to a knock on the door.

ED

Come in.

BOBBY comes through the door dressed in a set of new clothes-jeans, a workshirt, brogans. He has another similar set over his arm.

ED sits up, wincing, as BOBBY puts the outfit on the bed.

BOBBY

Here. Hope they fit.

ED

Are the stores open? What time is it?

BOBBY

After ten. Listen, Ed.

(lowers his
voice)

A guy's been here asking about the canoes.

ED

(quickenning)

What guy? What about the canoes?

ED sits up straight on the bed.

BOBBY

A little old guy who's some kind of local law man. He asked me about the other canoe, where was it, when did we lose it.

ED

What did you tell him?

(CONTINUED)

71 (Cont.)

BOBBY

What we agreed to tell him:
that we lost it in that last bad
place. But listen Ed they must
have found part of it up river.
They must have.

ED

Christ, what do we do now?

BOBBY

Can we patch up our story?

ED

(with desperate
reasonableness)

I think so. We have to try.
How this? We spilled twice.
The first time we lost the canoe
and Lewis broke his leg. And at
this last falls we tipped over
again and lost Drew.

BOBBY

(warming to
it)

Right. It's better because the
doctors can probably tell when
Lewis' leg was really broken.

ED

Good. Good.

BOBBY

(urgently)

But what am I gonna say to that
little rat-faced bastard when he
faces me up to what I told him
yesterday?

ED

Tell him... that he misread you:
that you never said it. I'll back
you up.

(CONTINUED)

71 (Cont.1)

BOBBY

(a fierce
whisper)

Lewis! We've got to get the
change of story to him. Before
they talk to him.

ED

(also whispering
now)

Hell, you're right. Let's go
to him.

ED desperately pulls on the rest of his new clothes. They
are both caught in a sudden uncontrollable panic. BOBBY
kneels down and ties ED's boot laces. It is a good
posture for a prayer.

BOBBY

Please God, let us be in time.

72. INT. TAXI

DAY

BOBBY and ED sit nervously on the edge of the seat, in
their new anonymous clothes, as the grimy cab hauls them
through Aintree. The DRIVER throws off the odd bit of
information of local interest, figuring them as tourists.
BOBBY, sitting right behind the DRIVER clenches his fists,
like a jockey urging on a horse and mimes 'Come on.'

TAXI DRIVER

That there's our town hall.

Stores are boarded up, the streets empty. The town is
depressing and derelict.

TAXI DRIVER

All this here'll be under water,
drowned..... Best thing ever
happened to this town.

(CONTINUED)

72 (Cont.)

The cab pulls into the forecourt of the hospital.
ED jabs BOBBY with his elbow. A patrol car is parked outside.

73. EXT. HOSPITAL

DAY

They get out, ED thrusting money and thanks at THE DRIVER.
The patrol car is empty. They hurry into the hospital trying not to break into a run.

74. INT. HOSPITAL

DAY

They pad down the corridor, looking rather furtive. THE DOCTOR who stitched up ED appears in front of them. His solicitous smile is genuinely human as well as professional.

DOCTOR

Well now, how's the Hari-kiri man?

They are forced to stop.

ED

Just fine, Doc, thanks to you.
We're anxious to see how our friend is getting along.

ED starts to shuffle past him, BOBBY at his heels..

DOCTOR

Are they treating you well,
up at Biddiford's?

BOBBY

Terrific, just terrific.

They are past him now, and turn into the ward.

75. INT. HOSPITAL WARD

DAY

ONE PATROLMAN stands at the end of the ward, just inside the door, talking closely and intimately with the WARD SISTER. His fellow sits next to the bed in which LEWIS lies, his leg up on pulleys. The FIRST PATROLMAN jerks up from THE SISTER as ED enters.

ED

Have you been talking to him?

OFFICER

No. Waiting for him to come round.

(CONTINUED)

75 (Cont.)

Before anyone can say anything ED walks down to the bed.
He smiles at the OTHER PATROLMAN.

ED

(softly)

Lewis. Are you awake?

LEWIS opens his eyes and looks at ED with just the suggestion of a wink. He has obviously been shamming sleep.

ED

How you feeling?

LEWIS

(in the cracked dry
voice of the recently
anthesised)

Never better.

ED cannot think how to disguise his purpose from the PATROLMAN whilst revealing it to LEWIS. He manages to communicate his anxiety to LEWIS who studies his face closely. ED glances at the PATROLMAN then clenches his mouth; trying to show LEWIS he cannot talk in front of the police. Up the ward BOBBY is engaging THE OTHER MAN, creating a noisy distraction.

LEWIS

(inspired)

What happened on that last
stretch of rapids, buddy?
I can't remember a thing.

ED

It killed Drew, Lewis.

LEWIS

(sad and not
acting)

I should have saved him instead
of....

ED

(quickly cutting in)

....How could you, lying in the
canoe with your leg broken?

LEWIS's eye flickers with the old gamesmanship, catching on.

LEWIS

We were overloaded, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

75 (Cont. 1)

ED

Four in one canoe? In those rapids! That gorge was bad enough where you got hit. But these mothers!

THE PATROLMAN has been listening closely. Now he senses something going on.

PATROLMAN

Now, just a minute.

But too late. LEWIS looks up into ED's eyes, understanding everything.

76. EXT. RIVER BANK BELOW FINAL RAPIDS

DAY

A miscellany of trucks, jeeps, pick-ups and two patrol cars are drawn up on the river bank. In the river a number of MEN are dragging with grappling hooks and chains. There are quite a FEW SPECTATORS, all enjoying the excitement.

ED sits on the bank next to a PATROLMAN who is obviously posted to watch him.

Another patrol car arrives and BOBBY steps out of it. ED turns to watch and gets a momentary impression that BOBBY is a prisoner.

He is surrounded by POLICEMEN and OTHERS. A PATROLMAN is talking to him with some vehemence, or appears to be.

ONE MAN detaches himself from the GROUP around BOBBY. He is a small, old, light-bodied man. He comes over to ED with the same sideways kind of walk the two men had when they came out of the trees.

DEPUTY QUEEN

Say, buddy. Can I talk to you for a moment?

ED

Sure. Sit down.

QUEEN

You say you started out day before yesterday?

ED

We started Friday, at about four o'clock in the afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

76 (Cont.)

QUEEN
In two canoes.

ED
Right.

QUEEN
And you lost one of 'em right here?

ED
No, a long ways upstream. When we came through here, we were all in one canoe.

They sit watching the searchers: the men, some of them waistdeep in the river, working with their grapples. One of the MEN in the river calls to another, as though he has found something. He shows an object.

QUEEN
(deliberately and slowly,
still looking at the river)
Your buddy says different.

ED
(with exaggerated
surprise)
I'll be darned if he does! Go ask him.

QUEEN
(shaking his head)
I done already asked him.

ED
Ask him again, or the one in the hospital.

QUEEN
No; no. You done had a chance to talk to 'em.

ED
(with real indignation)
What the hell are you driving at?

QUEEN
(playing his trump
card)
We found half that other canoe. But it weren't here. Seems it drifted up river!

(CONTINUED)

76 (Cont. 1)

QUEEN winks at THE PATROLMAN and gives a malicious half-smile.

ED

(since he's ready
for this)

So what? I told you we lost the other one farther up. Back up in a gorge. I can take you and show you where it was.

QUEEN

You know we can't get back up in there.

ED

That's your problem. Look: what in God's name is this all about, anyway?

(pause)

Are you the Sheriff here?

QUEEN

Depitty.

ED

Where's the Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Right here.

The SHERIFF had been standing right behind them, listening, leaning on the patrol car.

ED

Can you tell me what this man of yours is getting at? He seems to think we threw one of our party in the river, or something.

QUEEN

Maybe you did.

ED

For Christ's sake, for what reason?

QUEEN

(sullenly, like he
says everything)

How would I know that? I know you can't get your stories straight, and there ain't no good reason for you to be lyin'.

(CONTINUED)

76 (Cont. 2)

SHERIFF

Easy, Mr. Queen.

(to Ed)

What about this?

ED

What do you mean, what about it?
This man's just confused. Maybe
he doesn't like city people. God
knows what his game is.

QUEEN

(turning completely
murderous)

I'll tell you what, you city son of
a bitch. My sister called me yester-
day and told me her husband had been
out huntin' and hadn't come back.
I'll just god-damned well guarantee
y'll met up with him somewhere.

BULLARD looks from one to the other - as though politely
waiting to see if they have finished.

SHERIFF

You're sure about this other canoe,
now?

ED

You better believe I'm sure.

QUEEN

(pulling at Sheriff's
arm)

He ain't sure. He's lyin'. He's
lyin' thru his teeth. He's done
somethin' up yonder. He's done kilt
my brother-in-law.

ED

(turning with equal
violence on Queen)

Listen, you little bastard. Maybe
your brother-in-law killed somebody.
Why are you bringing in all this talk
about killing?

QUEEN

He's lyin', Sheriff. Don't let him go.
Don't let the son of a bitch go.

THE SHERIFF watches them both closely, studying ED's face
more than his words.

(CONTINUED)

76 (Cont. 3)

SHERIFF

We got nothin' to hold him for, Arthel.
Not right now. Let's see what comes
out of the river.

QUEEN

(almost screaming)

Don't let him go. I can just look at
him and tell.

(pauses, parting)

Listen, my sister called up last night,
and she was just a-cryin'. Benson
ain't come home yet. She knows he's
dead. She just knows it. And these
fellows was the only ones up in there,
when he was.

SHERIFF

Now, you don't know that, Arthel.
What you mean is, they was the only
city fellows.

ED shakes his head, in both real and feigned unbelief at
such goings-on.

SHERIFF

You'll have to sign a statement tonight.
You can go home in the morning. Just
leave me your addresses.

ED

Just let us know if you find anything.

SHERIFF

Don't worry. You'll be the fust..

77. EXT. THE GAS STATION

DAY

ED and BOBBY are paying off a taxi which has brought them
up from Ainty. They go over to the two cars, DREW'S and
LEWIS'S. The same BOY is working the pumps and he comes
across.

BOY

Got the keys here.

At that moment, SHERIFF BULLARD cruises slowly up and
stops. They are just getting into the cars, and they
are obliged to get out again, rather awkwardly.

SHERIFF

Morning! Y'all gettin' an early
start?

(CONTINUED)

77 (Cont.)

ED

Thought we would, yes.

The SHERIFF climbs out of his car, comes over and looks at them with his own special look; very penetrating, but amused and detached.

SHERIFF

The Griner brothers drove these down from Oree, right?

BOBBY

Right.

SHERIFF

You happen to see another man with them up there?

BOBBY and ED glance at each other.

BOBBY

Wasn't there another guy in the pick-up Ed?

ED

I think there was, yes.

The SHERIFF nods with a look that could mean everything or nothing. They are not sure if they can go. They start to move to the cars again.

SHERIFF

'Fore you go, buddy, let me ask you something and tell you something.

ED

(over his shoulder)

Ask away.

SHERIFF

How come y'all ended up with four life jackets?

The tongue of panic licks across BOBBY's face, and it would hardly escape BULLARD.

ED

We had an extra one.

SHERIFF

You had an extra one?

(CONTINUED)

77 (Cont. 1)

ED

(very sure, and looking him in the eye)

Yes, we did.

The SHERIFF probes them hard with his eyes, but the amusement is still there.

ED

What was it you wanted to tell me?

SHERIFF

Don't ever do anything like this again. Don't come back up here.

ED

(with a half-smile)

You don't have to worry about that.

(pauses)

You act like you're telling a hired gun to get out of town. But we're all bow and arrow men.

The SHERIFF smiles lazily, dangerously, a cat pawing two caught mice.

SHERIFF

OK. I want to see this place die peaceful. So long. Have a good trip.

ED

So long. And I hope Deputy Queen finds his brother-in-law.

SHERIFF

He was a mean bastard anyway.

The SHERIFF's smile broadens just a little, but is still enigmatic, dangerous. He turns to his car. ED and BOBBY exchange a quick smile of relief. BOBBY pantomimes a 'yippee' gesture to the SHERIFF's back. ED starts the car and BOBBY swings into the other. They pull out on to the road. BOBBY accelerates fiercely and passes ED, tooting his horn. They head towards the bridge and the river. It is starting to rain.

78. INT. DREW'S CAR

DAY

As BOBBY reaches the bridge he sounds his horn again and keeps sounding it until he reaches the other side. Then it stops and he is gone. ED slows down watching BOBBY go then turns off down the ramp to the river bank.

79. EXT. RIVER AT AINTRY BRIDGE

DAY

The light rain is mottling the river. He gets out of the car and looks at the canoe which has been pulled well up on the bank and turned over. Some muddy CHILDREN are playing near it.

ED runs his hands up and down the battered hull. It has taken a terrific beating, there are gouged out dents in the metal and only streaky remnants of paint.

ED's attention is attracted by some kind of activity across the river. Behind the trees and bushes he makes out a cemetery.

ED speaks to a little girl.

ED

What is it? A funeral?

LITTLE GIRL

(in very nasal,
country tones)

Naw. They're gonna move them
people 'fore they finish the dam.
They're diggin them up.

ED takes a closer look. Now he can make out the stacked coffins, and the MEN moving among them. Some kind of mechanical digger is at work. The CHILDREN scamper off downstream leaving ED a very solitary figure.

He looks down intently at the river, perhaps to fix it in his mind or maybe he expects it to yield up some secret, an answer. He looks back at the graveyard, frowning. TWO MEN hump a coffin on their shoulders. Suddenly, the rotting side of the coffin falls away. They stop and try and get a better hold, but the bottom sags and then collapses and their whole burden disintegrates. They walk off unconcernedly and pick up another coffin which the mechanical digger has gouged out of the ground.

ED watches this scene with a puzzled look as though it recalls a memory, or is the echo of a forgotten dream. During this the first line of Duelling Banjos is heard, repeated over and over at first faintly, then more strongly, the banjo answering the guitar.

DISSOLVE:

80. EXT. A RIVER MEADOW

DAY

It lies in water. Fish swim over the grass. The music rises too.

DISSOLVE:

81. EXT. WOODS

DAY

Deep tangled woods very much like the spot where the HILLBILLY was buried. Water rises around the tree trunks.

DISSOLVE:

82. EXT. THE CEMETERY

DAY

One or two tombs and stone crosses jut out of the water that submerges the graveyard. The music climbs with the water.

DISSOLVE:

83. EXT. GRINER'S YARD

DAY

The wrecked cars are half-flooded, an old-fashioned gasoline pump just has its head above water.

DISSOLVE:

84. EXT. LAKE

NIGHT

A vast lake, perfectly still reflects a long shaft of moonlight. The music levels off seeming to find fulfillment in the tranquillity of the lake that covers the drowned valley.

Then a moment of excruciating horror: a white hand surfaces followed by a grey shapeless hump - a corpse. The shock echoes in the music which becomes once again driving and powerful.

DISSOLVE:

85. EXT. LAKE

DAY

A grey windy morning. Two small boats with outboard motors are anchored out in the lake, a FROGMAN surfaces from the water and climbs into one of the dinghies. A group of people straggle along the lake shore. SHERIFF BULLARD is standing with ED, LEWIS and COBEY. LEWIS has crutches, his leg is amputated at the knee. At their feet is a body, covered with a sheet. The SHERIFF is speaking but the music drowns his words. He bends down to lift the sheet. The THREE MEN strain forward to watch in an agony of anticipation. He pulls up the sheet with a violent motion.

MATCHING CUT:

104.

86. INT. ED'S BEDROOM

NIGHT

ED throws back the sheet and jerks up in bed, horror struck. The music screams for him and stops. Silence.

MARTHA

(a soft mother's
voice)

It's all right, baby. Shh.....Go
to sleep. There, there.

She strokes his hair and he lies down on his side,
asleep immediately. She takes him in her arms.

87. EXT. ED'S HOUSE AND STREET

NIGHT

ED's house stands peacefully, safely in the comfortable
suburban street with others like it. The light in ED's
window goes off. The street is quiet and still, sleeping.
On each driveway a car is drawn up. A child's bicycle
lies on one of the neat lawns.

ED's good and decent neighbours are asleep, dreaming
whatever dreams they dream.

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